



LE TRUONG DUY

CURRENT SITUATION AND SOLUTIONS TO IMPROVE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SUBNATIONAL FRIENDLY INTERNATIONAL COOPERATIVE RELATION OF HO CHI MINH CITY

Faculty of Management and Business
Master's thesis
September 2020

ABSTRACT

Le Truong Duy: Current situation and solutions to improve the effectiveness of the subnational friendly international cooperative relation of Ho Chi Minh City

Master's thesis

Tampere University

Master's Degree Program in Public Administration

September 2020

Step by step, along path of development, Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC) has strengthened foreign relations and enhanced the City's international prestige. This process coincided with the economy advancing, political position solidifying and the growing trends of globalization, regionalization and decentralization. Taking into consideration the lack of study and review on foreign relations of Vietnamese localities, especially of HCMC, this study focuses on analyzing data and assessment to (i) affirm the linkage between the expansion of sister-city relations of HCMC and the elevation of the City's political influence as well as economic growth and (ii) evaluate the achievements and limitations of these relations, with the focus being 1991 – 2019 period.

The data consists of primary data and secondary data. Primary data includes practical and original data in the implementation of international friendship and cooperation at Hồ Chí Minh City's local level such as memorandums, official letters, emails, reports of visits and direct communication between the City foreign affairs agency and partner agencies in exporting, discussing, signing and implementing documents to establish friendship and cooperation between Hồ Chí Minh City and foreign local entities. The primary data also in-depth interviews and extensive surveys. For the secondary data, the author used documents on policies, guidelines and foreign policies of the Party, the State and the orientation of HCMC as well as documents on guidelines and directions to promote the international friendship and cooperation. The resolutions of the Party Central Committee, the Politburo, the Secretariat and the Prime Minister's Directive on international integration as well as articles published in the journals of international relations at home and abroad, newsletters from the Vietnamese representative missions abroad and reports from research institutes were also used to explore and analyze the meaning of words in documents on the basis of the context of the document's issuance or to make appropriate recommendations related to the process of planning and implementing this policy

The research also forecasts the development trends of HCMC's sister-city relationship in the next five years; proposes a number of solution packages to improve the quality of these relations. The research emphasizes the importance and necessity of practical solutions and mechanism reforms in enhancing the positive impacts of the City's cooperation programs with its sister cities across the globe.

Keywords: Local relations, Sisterhood, Sister-city relations, Friendship and Cooperation relations, International agreements, Implementation mechanisms of international agreements, Development resources.

The originality of this thesis has been checked using the Turnitin OriginalityCheck service.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1. Introduction.....	1
1.1 Definitions.....	1
1.2 The three layers of international cooperation at the local level	2
1.3 International cooperation at the local level in Vietnam and of Ho Chi Minh city	3
Chapter 2. Literary review	7
2.1. Overview on international research.....	7
Until now, there have been a few explores on Local relations, Sisterhood, Sister-city relations, Friendship and Cooperation relations, International understandings, Implementation instruments of universal understandings, Development assets, and so on.	7
2.2. Research on sub-national IFC in Vietnam.....	13
2.3. Key contents of the research	15
2.4. Reseach questions	15
2.5. The theoretical framework at overview	15
Chapter 3. Theoretical framework.....	18
Chapter 4. Data and method	21
4.1 Research methods.....	21
4.2 Research data.....	21
4.2.1 Primary Data.....	21
4.2.2 Secondary Data.....	22
Chapter 5. Results.....	24
5.1. Process of forming and developing relations	24
5.1.1. The period that ideology played a dominant role (from 1975 to 1991)	25
5.1.2. The period of expanding international friendship and cooperation for socio economic development (from 1991 to present)	28
5.2. Achievements and shortcomings of relationships	33
5.2.1. Achievements	36

5.2.2. Shortcomings.....	59
5.3. The prospective of relationship development for stage 2020-2025.	64
5.3.1. Context and general tendency	65
5.3.2. Prospective of relationship development tendency for stage 2020-2025.	66
5.4. Solutions to improve the relationship effectiveness	73
5.4.1. Solutions on mechanisms and policies	73
5.4.2. Practical solutions.....	82
Chapter 6. Conclusions.....	87
6.1. Summary and overview	87
6.2. Evaluation of the research.....	89
6.3. Suggestions for future research.....	90
References	92
Appendix.....	99

Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1 Definitions

Today, there are different concepts and definitions of local international relations/diplomacy. According to Prof. André Lecours (2008) (Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ottawa), “The phenomenon of regional governments developing international relations often called paradiplomacy.” Meanwhile, Prof. Pluijm and Melissen (2007) define regional level diplomacy as “institutions and processes by which cities, or local governments in general, engage in relations with actors on an international political stage with the aim of representing themselves and their interests to one another.” Another definition of paradiplomacy offered by Dr. Grydehoj (2014) (Director of Institute of Island Studies, University of Prince Edward Island) is “a political entity’s extra-jurisdictional activating targeting foreign political entities.” Accordingly, extra-jurisdictional activity is understood as the power expansion (de facto) of a certain political subject that exceeds the judicial capacity of the entity (de jure). Thus, paradiplomacy must target foreign entities, such as foreign subnational entities or foreign sovereign states.

The above definitions are quite vague when only considering city diplomacy based on relations of regional authorities and definitions of international relations without mentioning the role of the people. Although people participating in diplomatic activities have their own concept of “citizen diplomacy,” here I consider the role of the people as a factor to enhance the interaction and participation of the city. Therefore, I use the definition of city diplomacy defined by the Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG) because this definition both addresses the role of local government and states the purpose of paradiplomacy. Accordingly, “city diplomacy is a tool that local and sub-national governments [undertake] to contribute to conflict prevention, peace-building and post-conflict reconstruction with the purpose of creating a stable environment where people live in peace, democracy and prosperity” (Overbeek, 2007).

International cooperation at the local level is often divided into two types: bilateral cooperation and multilateral cooperation (Mincă, 2015). Accordingly, bilateral international cooperation at the local level is the relationship between two sub-national governments of two countries, promoting cooperation for the benefit and development of their respective regions (Manda & Nicolescu, 2017). This type of relationship is aimed at solving local interests such as local public services, territorial management, health care, sports, culture, etc. In the context of cooperate relations, local governments have certain rights in planning and managing the cooperation process.

1.2 The three layers of international cooperation at the local level

In terms of nature and content, international cooperation at the local level is different among regions due to the different approaches of governments. According to Professor André Lecours, paradiplomacy can be divided into three layers as follows (Lecours, 2008):

The first layer corresponds to economic issues. Local governments aim to promote foreign investments and enhance foreign trade through international cooperation. Typical examples are the American states whose international activities focus on the pursuit of economic interests. Australian states whose international presence is lower than that of the U.S. are also included in this category (Ravenhill, 1999).

The second layer involves different fields of cooperation (culture, education, technology, science, etc.). The sub-states in this layer have more extensive and multidimensional cooperative relations with foreign partners than in the first layer. The Rhône-Alpes region (France) is a typical example of this category (Lecours, 2008). Rhône-Alpes has developed a series of bilateral relations with sub-nation entities in many African (Mali, Senegal, Tunisia), Asian (Vietnam) and Central European countries (Poland). These relations, also known as “decentralized cooperation,” have been expanded in various areas like development assistance, cultural and educational exchange, scientific and technical cooperation, etc.

The third layer of paradiplomacy relates to political considerations. The cooperation in this layer features the international expression of local identity distinct from the sovereign’s identity, such as Quebec (Canada), Flanders (Belgium), Catalonia (Spain), or Basque Country (Paquin, 2003). These local entities tend to be ambitious. They seek to enhance international cooperation to affirm cultural differences, political autonomy and national characteristics of the communities they represent, thereby aiming to be recognized as a separate community or country.

These layers are not completely separate but complement each other. For example, paradiplomacies in advanced industrial countries were originally characterized in the first layer. Subsequently, many regional governments add other elements of cooperation from the second layer, while another few entities add the political part of the third layer.

Classifying layers of international cooperation at the local level can depend on whether the entity is a developed country, developing country or less developed country. For developed countries, paradiplomacy has a comprehensive and integrated approach to many different goals. Local governments of developed countries often devote a part to economic cooperation (layer one), rather than cooperation in the field of training, environment, culture, etc., (layer two) to strengthen political relations (layer three).

In this research, I will focus on analyzing the bilateral international cooperation relations at the local level, with a case study demonstrating the cooperation between Hồ Chí Minh City (HCMC) and foreign local entities.

1.3 International cooperation at the local level in Vietnam and of Ho Chi Minh city

In Vietnam, local bilateral international cooperation appeared quite early, starting in the early 1950s during the country's struggle to defend national independence. After the southern liberation and the unification of Vietnam, HCMC was the first to establish city diplomacy and gradually expanded, increasing in quantity and quality over time.

It can be said that the current international cooperation relationship of HCMC is extremely diverse in terms of partners, content and methods of establishing and implementing relations. Within the scope of the thesis, we focus on analyzing the cooperation between HCMC and foreign sub-national entities established on the basis of signing an international agreement stating the intention to establish a general framework system to deploy specific areas of cooperation. Before the 1990s, the term “friendship relation” was commonly used in Vietnam to refer to this type of relation. This term is equivalent to the English terms sister-city relationship, friendship-city relationship and twinning relationship (SisterCities International, 2017), which are commonly used to refer to this type of relation. However, after the 1990s, the term “international friendship and cooperation” was advocated by the government instead of the term “friendship relationship” to emphasize the element of “cooperation,” not only general friendship and twinning (Mofa.gov.vn, 2019).

The Sixth Congress of the Party (1986) proposed the policy of Doi Moi to take the country out of crisis after independence and unification. The Congress laid the foundation for fundamental and comprehensive innovation of the development mode of the country in all fields. For foreign affairs and international integration, the Congress set out the way "Vietnam wishes to be a friend and a reliable partner of international friends". This is the cornerstone, the lodestar for the diplomatic front, the foreign front of the country in the early renovation period, proceeding to normalization of diplomatic relations with major countries, breaking the siege and embargo, getting Vietnam deeply integrated.

Along with the whole country, Ho Chi Minh City has actively and proactively implemented many foreign activities since the early days of renovation in order to implement the policy of expanding foreign relations, breaking the siege and embargo, attracting, calling for foreign investment and so on. In particular, with a thorough grasp of the policy of "diversification and multilateralism" in international relations, the City has actively implemented the subnational friendship and cooperation with many localities in the world. The strengthening of friendly cooperation with localities of two

neighboring countries (Laos, Cambodia) and other countries in the region and ASEAN has also been promoted by the City, gradually bringing both intensive and extensive efficiency.

Subsequently, at the VII, VIII, IX congresses, the Party gradually improved the international integration policies and guidelines, "building an open economy, integrating with the region and the world"; "Actively integrating into the international and regional economy in the spirit of maximizing internal resources, improving the effectiveness of international cooperation, ensuring independence, autonomy and socialist orientation". On November 27, 2001, the Politburo of the 9th term issued Resolution No. 07- NQ/TW "on international economic integration". At the XI Congress, the Party set out foreign policy in the new period, in which the important point is to change the thinking and guideline from the "international economic integration" of the previous congresses to "international integration". From this innovation guideline, together with Resolution 22 - NQ/TW dated April 10, 2013 of the Politburo on international integration, a fundamental and comprehensive foundation has been created to implement international integration of our country in the new era; to be an important foundation for localities, including Ho Chi Minh City, to organize and implement international integration tasks in the new period, achieving important results, contributing to the successful implementation of the overall foreign policy.

With the results and achievements in Ho Chi Minh City's process of international integration in general, international cooperation in particular, the summarizing and re-evaluation of the implementation results and achievements, the identification of the current situation and challenges, thus providing solutions for subnational international integration are very important and urgent. However, in current reality, the researches on the field of subnational international cooperation in the whole country in general and the City in particular are still limited.

Regarding the issue of subnational international cooperation: recently, this content has been concerned by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Vietnam and localities. Every year, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs holds a Foreign Affairs Conference in the whole country, including a conference to summarize subnational international cooperative relations in June 2012, to summarize, evaluate and address difficulties, problems, propose solutions to orient the subnational international integration. However, until now, there has not been any official work or research on this topic to clarify the content of subnational international cooperation, the implementation methods, the practical experience and hence give a general model to ensure the process, approach to implementing subnational international cooperation nationwide while ensuring flexibility in implementing cooperation with specific characteristics and appropriate conditions of each locality.

Regarding Ho Chi Minh City's subnational international cooperation: Over the past years, the international integration has always been paid special attention by the city, and been basically

implemented in all sectors and specific areas. However, the study, synthesis, forecast and setting of the orientation of international integration of the City still contain many shortcomings compared to the requirements. The number of research projects on international integration of the city is very small.

With this research, I set out the goal of delving into the content of subnational international cooperation, using Ho Chi Minh City as a case study, analyzing and evaluating the process of the formulation and development of Ho Chi Minh City's subnational international cooperative relations, factors affecting subnational international cooperative relations of the City, forecasting the trends and proposing the solutions to improve the efficiency of subnational international cooperative relations on the basis of assessing the achievements and shortcomings in the implementation of subnational international cooperation of Ho Chi Minh City.

With the position as an economic center and gateway for economic exchange and international cooperation of the country and the region, in the context Ho Chi Minh City is trying to focus on directing the implementation of Resolution 54 of the National Assembly on specific mechanism, at the same time focusing on directing the successful implementation of the Resolution of the Xth Congress (2015-2020) of the City Party Committee, including "effective implementation and synchronous foreign affair activities of the Party, State diplomacy, people's diplomacy; strengthening the innovation activities, foreign relation information, promoting the image of Vietnam and the City to attract foreign investors and expatriates to participate in developing the city and building the country .

Implementing well the cooperation contents signed with other countries, continuing to expand international cooperation, focusing on quality and efficiency of development cooperation" and implementing the conclusions at the Conference of summarizing the City's foreign affairs 2017, in which the foreign relation will be transformed into one of the three pillars of the City (in addition to defense - security, economy - culture - society), the research team's conducting this project is very necessary, important and urgent, contributing to helping the City systematically re-organize the city's international cooperation in a clear and scientific manner, and clarifying the function of the City's subnational international cooperation, results and lessons learned and solutions to improve the effectiveness of economic cooperation of the City in the coming time, creating a unity in thinking and awareness of international integration of the City, from which forming integration policies in a stable, proactive, strategic and long-term manner with a key focus, implementing the policies in a synchronous manner with clear orientations on the basis of smooth coordination of relevant agencies, creating a comprehensive strength in the implementation of international integration of the City; At the same time, this project will be one of the reference sources of subnational international

cooperation for cities and provinces across the country - a very significant contribution of the City to the diplomatic sector and integration work of the whole country in "consistent implementation of independent foreign policy, autonomy, peace, cooperation and development; multilateralism, relation diversification, proactive and active international integration; enhancing the position of the country for the sake of the country, nation, and for a strong prosper socialist Vietnam, etc. Promoting the understanding, friendship and cooperation between Vietnamese people and the people of the world, which has been mentioned by the guideline of building the country in the transition period to socialism (amended and developed in 2011).

Chapter 2. Literary review

2.1. Overview on international research

Until now, there have been a few explores on Local relations, Sisterhood, Sister-city relations, Friendship and Cooperation relations, International understandings, Implementation instruments of universal understandings, Development assets, and so on.

Dr. John Sanghyun Lee is a partner teacher at Global Law Department (GLD), College of Law, Soongsil University (SSU). Since 2010, he has filled in as an associate teacher, a GLD chief, a head of Research Center on Conflict Resolution and Peaceful Re-Unification of Korea, and a senior supervisor of SSU Faculty Senate. He filled in as a lawful master of reasonable political decision the executives advisory group for SSU President. He has additionally upheld East Asian Regional Round (EARR) of Stetson International Environmental Moot Court Competition as a panel part, an appointed authority, and a head of dedication survey board. He likewise offered talks to law understudies at Gachun University College of Law, and Duksung Women's University Department of Law. Law Courses that he has educated are Criminal Law and Criminal Procedures of Korea, U.S. also, Comparative Criminal Law, Criminal Law Clinic, Global Community and International Law, and International Development Cooperation and Law. In 2016, he distributed a book called “Strategies to Achieve a Binding International Agreement on Regulating Cartels” (Lee, 2016). This book tends to the absence of restricting multi-sidelong worldwide concurrence on cartels, through investigation of preliminaries and disappointments. It additionally recommends vital ways to deal with beat current stops. Moreover, the book contrasts universal concession to cartels with between legislative item understanding which has been grown independently through global law. Through this venture, the creator advances that fruitful global law on cartels needs to mirror the interests and contentions of creating nations.

Urban areas have gotten progressively imperative to worldwide legislative issues however have to a great extent involved a fringe place in the scholastic investigation of International Relations. This is an outstanding oversight for the control, albeit one which might be clarified by International Relations 's conventional state anti-extremism, the enslavement of the city to the requests of the regional state in the cutting edge time frame, and an absence of applied and scientific systems that can permit researchers to incorporate the effect of urban communities inside their work. Introducing case-explicit grant from driving specialists in the field, every commitment directs the peruser through the changing idea of urban communities in the worldwide framework and their expanding unmistakable quality in worldwide administration results “The Power of Cities in International Relations” (Curtis, 2014) highlights contextual analyses on the budgetary intensity of urban communities, city activity in the

security area, coordinated effort of urban communities in adapting to ecological issues, transnational urban districts, and chairmen as global entertainers to represent if the connection between the city and the state has changed in significant manners, and how urban communities are engaged by basic changes in world governmental issues. The multidisciplinary and worldwide concentration in *The Power of Cities in International Relations* reveals truly necessary insight into the criticalness of the reappearance of urban areas from the long shadow of the country state. Just by looking at the instruments that have engaged urban communities over the most recent couple of decades would we be able to comprehend their new capacities and abilities in worldwide governmental issues.

"Building Sustainable Couples in International Relations" (Rousset, 2014) examines procedures of worldwide clash change and tranquil collaboration. It features how basic delegate level parts have demonstrated increasingly helpful for advancing rapprochement between rival states than interstate strategic commitment through steady personality change. Likewise, International companionship is an unmistakable sort of interstate relationship, and that accordingly, it can add to catch parts of global legislative issues that have since quite a while ago stayed unattended. "Friendship and International Relations" (Koschut and Oelsner, 2014) offers a system for breaking down companionship in global legislative issues by introducing an assortment of reasonable methodologies and observational cases. The adequacy of universal condition understandings has so far been concentrated only from an institutional or system driven point of view. Such investigation centers around the entertainers in understanding creation and makes light of the job of the structures and constraints inside which they work. "Environment, Society and International Relations" (Kütting, 2013) contends that a qualification must be made viable foundations managing natural issues, and the helping of an ecological issue. Gabriella Kutting presents the idea of natural adequacy to address this issue and goes past examinations by condemning existing methodologies, however offering another option. Kutting's methodology acquaints another point of view with the viability banter, in light of a more comprehensive strategy and an ecocentric as opposed to natural administration perspective. In view of an evaluate of system hypothesis, this book plots the structures wherein understanding creation works and shows that a principal reassessment of the connection among condition and society is essential. "Environment, Society and International Relations" offers new experiences into the investigation of social association and its impact on nature. It likewise offers a convincing study of neoliberal institutionalist thought, which has once in a while been introduced in such a careful and persuading way. This notable volume is a basic asset for specialists and understudies of International Relations, Environmental Studies and International Political Economy, just as for strategy experts. "Central-Local Relations in Asian Constitutional Systems" (Harding and Sidel, 2015) inspects regional administration in Asia with regards to focal nearby relations. In a time of endeavors to

manage issues, for example, decentralization, struggle including ethnic and strict enclaves, and requests for provincial independence, it is ideal to look at focal nearby relations in a container Asian point of view, evaluating the endeavors in a scope of various protected frameworks from Japan to Myanmar to re-request established structures for neighborhood government. The book takes a gander at the protected frameworks for sorting out focal nearby relations in Asia and endeavors to make determinations from contemporary encounters.

A wellspring of enduring strain in states is how much dynamic force and authority ought to be gathered in focal organizations and people. At present the standard way of thinking of focal nearby relations has swung for decentralization. "Central-Local Relations in Asia-Pacific Convergence or Divergence?" (Turner, 1999) researches whether such intermingling is occurring through point by point assessment in Asia-Pacific. The aftereffects of the overview uncover a mind boggling picture in which disparity is as yet apparent in the district's examples of focal neighborhood relations.

As of late, the contemporary sociologies have again directed their concentration toward space and places. The speculation is that these are not coincidental scenes but rather an all out unrest in the method of review financial procedures and their connections with social and social structures. As such, this new affectability to places offers the chance of reexamining issues average of financial matters in an alternate point of view that may be characterized as nearby turn of events, one of the terms most (ab)used in the contemporary logical and political discussion. In "Local Development and Competitiveness" (Conti and Giaccaria, 2013) the creators will in this way attempt to help all the more emphatically, in spite of the fact that in a fundamentally disentangled way, the chance of building a hypothesis of nearby turn of events. The key thought is that there is no single improvement model working at a given time and legitimate for all spots, however that it is progressively right to discuss various advancement ways that exist together in a similar spot simultaneously (variety of improvement ways). The essential issue isn't to distinguish the progression of unmistakable domineering models (Fordism versus post-Fordism, large scale manufacturing versus lean creation, etc), yet to show how the intricacy of the contemporary economy requests new ideas to clarify its clear inconsistencies. In the creators' view, the origination of a hypothesis of neighborhood improvement infers radical reevaluating in institutional terms of the method of review the economy and creation, perceiving that behind monetary advancement lies an abundance of institutional resources that make the experience among nearby and worldwide more open and shifted than any other time in recent memory (institutional biodiversity).

"Cities in Transition: Globalization, Political Change and Urban Development" (Sliwa, 2006) was composed with the point of indicating that even in the period of globalization advancements showing up in urban areas are not liable to practically unqualified worldwide powers. Or maybe, general

powers are unequivocal inevitabilities during the time spent urban rebuilding, regularly affecting its course and speed, yet improvements and particularities inside a city emphatically impact the course of occasions and the degree to which negative qualities of globalization may happen. Berlin, Brussels, Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, Hong Kong, Jerusalem, Johannesburg, Moscow, St. Petersburg, Sarajevo and Vienna: Using these significant urban areas the exceptional connection among worldwide and nearby/local powers is broke down. The contextual analyses were chosen dependent on their political and social setting and the way that their social and political texture was liable to significant changes in the ongoing past. How worldwide procedures show themselves locally relies by and large upon how improvement forms and endogenic possibilities are started locally so as to adapt to the new worldwide monetary and cultural conditions.

When finding the relative documents and researches for literary review, especially international sources, I also found that there need to be collected and combined sources of diplomacy and of international relations/cooperation, at both national and sub-national scale and at certain relevant purposes of diplomacy as national scale and of international relations/cooperation as sub-national scale. There are also some similarities and some relevant and subordinated relations/procedures/steps between nation and locality when implementing diplomacy (at national scale) and international relations/cooperation (at sub-national scale).

At national scale, there were reasearches on diplomacy emphasizing on political and economic interests. Diplomacy plays a very important role at the present age of globalization and integration. Diplomacy has not only acted as generally political area as tradition to protect national interests but also contributed to variety of fields of nation's development including science, technology, human right, and especially economic interests. There are, currently, a relationship between economy and diplomacy. Diplomats engaged more in economic policymaking (Seabrooke, 2011) through their diplomatic tools to serve for national economic benefits. This is Diplomacy for economic interests, or economic diplomacy in other words. To fulfil the task for economic interests, diplomacy implements two levels of diplomatic cooperation, bilateral and multilateral levels, in international collaboration. With the globalization and integration in recent time, one country can not develop the economy itself only based on its resources without the cooperation with other countries. There are many non-economic factors such as culture, geography, sociologic and so on account for international economic and commercial development. However, the fact is that political factors draw the important role in international trade. In this case, governments are involved and act as both establishing the nation's commercial foreign policy, deciding instruments to implement it and connecting other countries or organizations to establish common trade policies mutually or bilaterally (Ruffini, 2016). In this concept and playground, there is a relationship between economic and politic in term of foreign

policies. Government, as one of the players, utilizes diplomacy for protecting and developing its interests of complex economic (as fields of FDI, ODA, trading, energy, technology, science, and so on) with another government or international organization (Uludag, Karagul & Baba, 2013).

In area of politic and international relations, there are many definitions of diplomacy. According to Uludag et al (2013), diplomacy is considered as the most comprehensive and broad terms of international relations. Some researches showed that diplomacy is traditionally used to implicate a mutual agreement among nations through secret, formal, and interpersonal relationships (Lim, 2017). Other researches said that diplomacy is generally elicited the present diplomacy as both a peaceful and violent activity (Lucinescu, 2017). For Vietnam, Vietnam's diplomatic policy is aimed at "strengthening solidarity on the basis of common objectives and principles for peace, sovereignty and sustainable development" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Vietnam (Online)).

Via the definitions of diplomacy, it is easily to understand that economic diplomacy is the term to implicate the diplomacy for economic interests of a nation in terms of giving priority to attracting private investment and encourage foreign partnerships for the country's development projects (Economic diplomacy among new foreign minister's priorities, 2017, Oct 01. AllAfrica.Com) or to accelerating productivity, creating job opportunity and promoting in both domestic and foreign direct investment. Economic diplomacy is to take the advantages of politically foreign policy and diplomatic channel to achieve success in intern goals of economic development and in other interests of the nation (Daily Mirror. 2017, Oct 02). In Vietnam, economic diplomacy has been considered as one of three key pillars of diplomacy, among political and cultural pillars. It is mainly implemented at two levels, bilateral and multilateral levels.

For bilateral level, as stated by Lord Palmerston, who served as Foreign Secretary and Prime Minister in the middle of 19th century, "it is the business of Government to open and to secure the roads for the merchant" (as cited in Ruffini, 2016). Traditionally, diplomacy is a form of foreign policy and through diplomatic tools, diplomats have connected with nations abroad to open commercial routes and trade networks which are economic interest - one of national interests. Diplomats have worked as 'engage with' rather than 'communicate to' function in their attempts to realize their foreign policy goals (Sevin, 2014). Then, in-charged agencies of economic diplomacy such as Ministries of foreign affairs, of trade, and of finance have become the traditional locations for diplomacy for economic interests between states (Seabrooke, 2011). However, in some countries like Vietnam, the functional agencies sometime overlapped their duties because there are many different and independent agencies running the same function of diplomatic policy for economic interests, said H.E. Pham Binh Minh, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Vietnam's Foreign Affairs in an interview (Department of External Relation – Ho Chi Minh City, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Vietnam (Online)). So, there

needs to have a successful cooperation mechanism between the Ministries and localities in Vietnam to boost its economic diplomacy. At this level, diplomats together with their nations' policymakers use specific skills and knowledge to connect with bilateral parties to set up official state visits or official visits of various range of government delegations aiming at bilateral negotiations for Free Trade Agreement (FTA) or Bilateral Trade Agreement, so-called BTA, and so on (Goldfarb, 2005). For multilateral level, it is usually realized that the United Nations (the UN) is a typical stand for international and multilateral cooperation in the world at present. With all the UN's mechanism and its systemically structural organizations, the UN is the playground as-known equal for all countries in the world. States and governments joining in the UN's systemically structural organizations will be treated equally and they will have the same right to raise their voices for international issues various from politic, culture, science, human right, etc., and off-course even international economic issues (Politics & Government Business, 2014, Oct 23). In term of multilateral economic diplomacy, there are some other internationally specific organizations which states and governments, on the way of international and regional integration, can join in to cope with global financial stability or the international trade regime or to protect their national economic interests. These organizations have been known as World Trade Organization (WTO) (Matsushita, 2004), International Monetary Fund (IMF), Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) and so on. States and governments appoint their diplomatic missions or representative offices behind some of these organizations to fulfil the functions of diplomacy for economic interests. Vietnam joint in the UN in 1977 and send it representative missions behind the UN to enhance the cooperation between two sides in various fields in accordance with Vietnam's national interests including economic benefits (Asia News Monitor, 2017, Sep 22). For this level, states and governments, via their diplomatic missions or representative offices and at-home functional agencies (Ministry of foreign affairs, of trade, and of finance, etc.) clarify their needs to integrate into the multilateral mechanisms by identifying their tradable goods (both in products and service), measures of economic co-operation, trade and investment promotion, and co-operation in specified areas. Then, states and governments appoint a negotiating committee or an in-charge agency with the participation of diplomatic missions and relevant agencies. The negotiation process will be launched after that, and all parties finally set up a multilateral cooperation mechanism by finishing negotiation process and signing multilateral agreement (Gaur, 2003).

At sub-national scale, in fact, local-level international cooperation began to flourish on every continent after the Cold War. At that time, local twinning cooperation began to spread from localities of Western European countries such as France, Germany, and Poland to localities in post-Soviet space, Asia, and Africa (Joenniemi & Janczak, 2017). However, currently the number of scholarly

research papers, combined with practice, focusing on local involvement at the global level and local involvement in conflict prevention, resolution and post-conflict reconstruction is still not commensurate with reality. Some outstanding studies include the writings of Professor Aldecoa Frank and Michael Keating (Frank & Keating, 1999) entitled *Paradiplomacy in Action: The foreign relations of subnational governments* published in 1999, an article by the scholar Hafteck (Hafteck, 2003) on decentralized cooperation published in the *Journal of Public Administration and Development* No. 23 in 2003, the study by Professor André Lecours, entitled *Paradiplomacy: Reflections on the foreign policy and international relations of regions* published in the *Journal of International Negotiation* No. 7 in 2003 (Lecours, cited in *International Negotiation*, No 7, 2003). The majority of these studies are on cases of local governments in the European Union (EU) - representing the most successful regional integration of today's international system. The scholars argued that the cooperation between localities in Europe was related to the needs and interests of the localities as well as their own countries. Through their cooperation, EU localities have the opportunity to lobby together at supranational level. However, the scholars also noted that only a small number of European localities could influence the political and legal decisions of their countries and European localities were limited by their domestic context, as well as financial and human resources.

Apart from the above studies, there have not been many studies analyzing the significance and role of localities in regional integration. In a recent study of the case of the Mercosur group's regional integration and local involvement in this regional integration project, the authors concluded that the identification of the main goals of a regional economic bloc and understanding of its behavior depends on the participation capacity of the localities in the group (Filho, & Gallo, 2013).

2.2. Research on sub-national IFC in Vietnam

In Vietnam, almost no study on this topic has been done. So far, there has been only the book "Diplomatic Activities of Ho Chi Minh City in the period of 1975 - 2015" authored by Tran Nam Tien (Tien, 2015); "Southern Vietnam in the period of international integration" by Tran Nam Tien - Vo Van Sen (Sen, 2013); the writings by Ambassador Vu Hac Bong with the title "Foreign affairs of Ho Chi Minh City - a 40-year lookback" (Bong, cited in *Saigon Liberation*, 2016); the interviews, articles of the City leaders posted on the mass media. In these works, the authors mainly pointed out the achievements in the external affairs of the city associated with the common external affair achievements of the whole country, thereby proposing solutions to improve the efficiency of foreign affairs of the City, not yet making separate segment analysis of local level IFC between Ho Chi Minh City and foreign localities.

Up to now, there have not been many thematic seminars on local level international friendly cooperation (IFC) relations in Vietnam. In 2012, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs hosted the

Conference on Summarizing Local level International Cooperation and Friendship in Ho Chi Minh City to summarize, evaluate, and identify difficulties and problems, and propose solutions and orientations for developing this type of relationship. Since then, there have been no more conferences or seminars on this topic; the recommendations of the localities at the Conference in 2012 were mostly unresolved.

It can be said that the international relations of Ho Chi Minh City in general and the local level IFC relations of Ho Chi Minh City in particular have been helping promote internal resources and attracting external resources for socio-economic development, step by step improving the international position of the City, becoming "one of the four pillars of the City's development".

In this context, when there is almost no academic research on local level IFC relations in Vietnam, I think it is so urgent to do this research to help the city be fully aware of and promote the role of this type of relationship in its quest for development. The general context of HCMC's international relations and the international friendship and cooperation of HCMC in particular are developing strongly, helping to promote internal resources and attract external resources for socio-economic development to enhance the international position of the City step by step so it can become "one of the three pillars of the City's development." Therefore, the absence of separate works and research projects on this type of relation is a flaw.

The Resolution of the 10th Municipal Party Congress (tenure 2015-2020) states that one of the City's foreign affairs tasks is to "...Well implement the contents of the cooperation signed with foreign local entities, continue to expand international cooperation, [and] focus on the quality and effectiveness of cooperative development." As a result of the international cooperation process and the deployment of HCMC's local and international relations over the past 30 years, in the absence of analyzing the international cooperation at the local level, assessing implementation results is important.

Thus, my research intends to focus on the subnational/substate international cooperation integration relations of Ho Chi Minh City (Ho Chi Minh City and foreign localities are established on the basis of signing an international agreement that clearly states the intention to establish an overall relationship framework to deploy specific areas of cooperation) from 1975 to the present.

This is also the first research project on the subnational/substate international cooperation integration relations in Ho Chi Minh City after more than 40 years of establishing and implementing this type of international relationship. The project aims to help the City Government systematize the existing fifty subnational/substate international cooperation integration relations by clarifying the concepts and connotations of this type of relationship; analyze and evaluate the process of forming and developing relationships; evaluate achievements and shortcomings, identify the causes of achievements and shortcomings of relationships; comments on relationship trends in the period of 2020-2025. Based on

the results of systematization, the project asserts that the subnational/substate international cooperation integration relation is really an important resource for the city's development; From there, recommending the City measures to improve the efficiency of relations, helping relations to promote more role for the socio-economic development of the City in the next five years.

The research results can be a source of data for subsequent related studies and a reference for localities throughout the country - a meaningful contribution of the City to diplomacy and integration. international of the whole country.

2.3. Key contents of the research

Researching the current situation of Ho Chi Minh City's subnational friendly international cooperative relations: overview of the relations, the process of formation and development, affecting factors; achievements and shortcomings of the subnational friendly international cooperative relations of HCMC

Forecasting the development trend of Ho Chi Minh City's subnational friendly international cooperative relations and proposing solutions to improve Ho Chi Minh City's subnational friendly international cooperative relations.

2.4. Research questions

To gain those of contents, in the research, I try to collect data to solve three following research questions:

- What are the factors that urge Ho Chi Minh City to implement the policies of developing subnational friendly international cooperative relations?
- What kind of policy implementation is effective in implementing the policies of developing friendly international cooperation relations at subnational level for the socio-economic development of the City and in implementing national foreign policy?
- What are the solutions to further promote the effectiveness of friendly international cooperation relations at the subnational level?

2.5. The theoretical framework at overview

However, another obstacle when I decided to do this research is to choose theoretical framework. Due to the fact of limited numbers of studies on subnational/substate international cooperation integration relationships in the world and in the country, the application of theories of international relations to research the above content is also limited. Based on the aforementioned definition of subnational/substate diplomacy and reference to the theoretical frameworks used to analyze cases of city-level sisterhood relations of EU and African localities (Caporaso, 1970; Caporaso, 1998), I selected three theories for analysis and research, since then, I have selected the most appropriate theory to apply to the research process of local cooperation in Ho Chi Minh City.

The first is Historical Institutionalism. Accordingly, historical institutional theory considers institutions to be the permanent heritage of specific historical processes or the struggles of political factors within the system (Lecours, 1998). This theory emphasizes the formality, legality, and timeliness of an organization. Historical institutionalists argue that history and historical events play an important role in political choices and outcomes. I did not use this theory as a framework of empirical analytical theory in Ho Chi Minh City because it emphasizes the structure and regulations of state and local organizational systems while the City's subnational/substate cooperation agencies and mechanisms are still in the process of completion and legal documents regulating subnational/substate external activities are still incomplete and incompatible with the premise of historical institutional theory.

The second is Rational Choice Theory. The first characteristic of rational choice theory is that every individual has a right to choose actions. The second characteristic is that people always act in a deliberate, thoughtful and personal way to select and use resources appropriately to achieve maximum results while spending a minimum fee (Friedman & Hechter, 1988). This theory is based on the perception that some philosophers always believe that human nature is selfish, always seeking satisfaction. Some classical economists emphasize that the basic motivation for behavior related to economics and profit is when people must make a decision to choose an action. In today's society, rationality theory is right in a way that emphasizes individualism and the action of individuals for their own selfish interests. We can clearly see the role of an individual leader in foreign and domestic policy of some federal countries, such as President Donald Trump of the United States or President Putin of the Russian Federation. However, the application of this theoretical framework to the case analysis of Ho Chi Minh City will reveal limitations. Specifically, human behavior and actions are not entirely based on personal interests but are also governed by factors such as resources and social institutions. Social institutions will impose action models for individuals, typically City leaders, through criteria, regulations and principles to create systematic influence on social results. Besides, deciding the direction and development roadmap of the City, the city's policies are discussed and decided by the collective, the individual role of the head man is not as clear. Therefore, the application of rational choice theory to evaluate Ho Chi Minh's way of implementing external relations is not proper.

The third is neo-functionalism. This theory is based on the work of Ernest B. Haas, a German-American political scientist, developed between the 1950s and 1960s and primarily served to explain the process of European unification. Ernest B. Haas and several other researchers argue that, while still playing an important role, nations are increasingly empowering localities to make it easier for

them to achieve welfare goals through integration (Haas Ernest B., 1964, 2004; Philippe Schmitter, 2003).

I understood that theoretical framework is the key foundation and direction for a research. However, I also realized that it should be flexible to consider and select the theoretical framework which is among the above three ones. When clearly considering the above three theoretical frameworks, I decided mainly to use the neo-functionalism.

Chapter 3. Theoretical framework

Neo-functionalism assumes that states cannot take full care of the well-being of the people. In this context, subnational/substate governments must pursue local interests internationally. This process falls under the principle of spillover. Accordingly, cooperation in economic and social fields will lead to cooperation in the field of politics. Neo-functionalism also assumes that integration takes place in low politics - that is, primarily in the fields of society, commerce, and technology. Neo-functionalism is based on four main pillars (Schmitter, 2003): First, neo-functionalists admit that in addition to nations, there are also other actors involved in international relations such as supranational entities and subnational/substate governments. Secondly, Neo-functionalism states that states act as an integration model for subnational/substate governments. In other words, sub-nations/states can learn from the way their countries participate in international political life, from which they can take advantage of this model, or resources from their countries when participating in international activities. Thirdly, Neo-functionalism emphasizes interactivity when arguing that integration as a two-way interaction process. When applied at a subnational/substate perspective, this shows the interaction between the nations and subnations/substates in the integration process. And finally, the Neo-functionalism argues that the integration process creates political loyalty, which in turn prevents national development (Burley & Mattli, 1993). When applied at the subnational/substate angle, this feature helps eliminate concerns about the separatist tendencies of subnations/substates as they actively participate in international life.

Despite being highly praised, Neo-functionalism has been criticized because it primarily explains the process of European unity (which ultimately resulted in the formation of a “superstate”). Even E. Haas acknowledged that his original theory was “outdated” by describing the European integration process as smooth and automatic, which in fact the process was “erratic and reversible,” especially in the mid-1970s when Europe was caught in “pessimism” (Ernest, 1970). However, one can see that the theories are intended to indicate trends rather than principles for human activities. Therefore, theory interpretation and application need to be flexible. Though there is criticism, the context of international relations at local level has not attracted adequate research from international relations. The Neo-functional theory, based on the four pillars mentioned above, can possibly be applied to this research topic due to the following factors:

NO	Factor	Neo-functionalism theory	Applied to Hồ Chí Minh City
1.	Subjects of international relations	States, supranational entities, sub-states.	HCMC – a special and central Vietnamese city in various fields – considered as the subject of

			international relations, is actively participating in regional relations and gradually integrating deeply in international affairs.
2.	Operating model	Emphasizes that the state acts as an integration model for city or sub-state governments.	The city's external relations are implemented in accordance with Vietnam's external affair policies and orientation. Moreover, Vietnam's external activities play an important role in guiding the city's external activities.
3.	Interactivity	Integration is a two-way process among state members or supranational organizations.	The deep participation of HCMC in international activities has a positive impact on the development of Vietnam's foreign policy, whereas the “multilateral and diversified” foreign policy of the State is a foundation for the City to deploy its external activities at a local level.
4.	Characteristics	Cooperation may begin in areas of political irrelevance (e.g. coal and steel industries in the EU) and may gradually expand into other important political fields (e.g. diplomacy and national defense). In other words, there may be a “spillover” process from one field to another.	HCMC cooperates on politics-economy-culture with other entities, thereby expanding cooperation to other areas to solve its current challenges such as infrastructure, environmental protection, sustainable development, etc.
5.	In the context of international integration	The integration process creates political loyalty, thus helping prevent threats to the development of the nation. When applied to the	The City's adherence to all aspects of the country is without debate.

		local level, this feature eliminates concerns about the “separatism” trend of the sub-states as they actively participate in international affairs.	
--	--	---	--

In short, through an overview of the research situation on local-level cooperation in the world and in the country, as well as the analysis of the aforementioned theories, it can be realized that a common feature is that no theory “fits” well with the international friendship and cooperation at the local level in Hồ Chí Minh City. Each theory can be viewed as relevant at one stage or in some aspects of the integration process. However, among these theories, I found neo-functionalism to be the most appropriate. In the next sections of the thesis, I will analyze five characteristics of neo-functionalism, especially the affirmation of the City's attachment to the country in all aspects.

Chapter 4. Data and method

4.1 Research methods

Based on the objectives and research tasks set out, I decided to select qualitative research methods to solve research questions and use Neo-functionalism as a basis for analysis. The qualitative research method helps provide necessary tools, allowing me to analyze the collected data to gain a comprehensive and in-depth view of the current status of the international friendship cooperation at local level policies' implementation. During the research, I prepared several research questions and methods to collect information. When using qualitative research, I can tailor these questions to the topic as new information emerges during data collection.

4.2 Research data

Data sources used for analysis include primary data and secondary data as follows:

4.2.1 Primary Data

Primary data includes practical and original data in the implementation of international friendship and cooperation at Hồ Chí Minh City's local level. To extract primary data, I use documents such as memorandums, official letters, emails, reports of visits and direct communication between the City foreign affairs agency and partner agencies in exporting, discussing, signing and implementing documents to establish friendship and cooperation between Hồ Chí Minh City and foreign local entities. These resources summarize an overview of the city's historical context, approach, and orientation as well as its international partners in establishing and implementing the above relations. Besides, the primary data also includes information that I directly collect and analyze through two methods: in-depth interviews and extensive surveys.

In-depth interviews: I conducted in-depth interviews with 13 people belonging to the following three groups:

- Officials and experts who directly formulate, propose and implement policies on international friendship and cooperation at local level in HCMC (experts from the Department of Foreign Affairs and some relevant departments).
- Officials and experts who directly formulate, propose and implement policies with foreign local entities having relations with HCMC (the focal department in charge of foreign affairs of foreign entities).
- Officials and experts at several Vietnamese diplomatic missions abroad, who are or have been directly promoting the relationship of international cooperation at the local level of HCMC.

The interview question was designed to find out the views of the interviewees about (i) The policy of international friendship and cooperation at HCMC's local level; (ii) The effective implementation of

this type of relation, especially in the city's socio-economic development; (iii) The shortcomings/limitations of this type of relation; (iv) Forecasting the development trend of the relation.

Extensive survey:

I surveyed 125 people belonging to the following four groups:

- Municipal and local leaders and officials of some departments directly involved in the implementation of external activities
- Municipal leaders and officials working in socio-political organizations participating in external activities
- Department of International Affairs lecturers and students at universities and research institutes in the City
- Leaders and focal point people of foreign affairs in the City's big enterprises that have participated or benefited from the city's international friendship and cooperation at the local level.

The purpose of this survey is to understand the perceptions and views of the target groups in the society about international friendship and cooperation at the local level in HCMC (such as concepts, roles, achievements, limitations, directions, etc.). After conducting the survey, I summarize the level of awareness and societal support for the international friendship and cooperation at the local level. In the process of gathering information, I specifically analyzed the research object and methods to identify the sample. The questionnaire was built on the basis of combining closed and open-ended questions to find out how people assess the importance of this relationship development policy. The survey also aimed to acquire an assessment of the need and effectiveness based on the interviewee's point of view. The results obtained after the survey were statistically analyzed and compared to evaluate the level of awareness and understanding of city officials and citizens about the international friendship and cooperation at HCMC's local level (concepts, roles, achievements, limitations, directions, etc.). The statistical analysis of the survey is presented in the Appendix. Based on that information, I will have a basis to build arguments for the research hypothesis.

4.2.2 Secondary Data

The method of collecting and analyzing secondary data was selected due to the diversity of this data source, helping me to obtain multidimensional information about the research issues. I use documents on policies, guidelines and foreign policies of the Party, the State and the orientation of HCMC as well as documents on guidelines and directions to promote the international friendship and cooperation at the local level other provinces to gain an overview of approaches and policy implementation models in the City and others. I also use central-level documents including

resolutions of the 12th Party Central Committee, the Politburo, the Secretariat and the Prime Minister's Directive on international integration, especially Resolution 22 of the Politburo on international economic integration, the Prime Minister's Directive 15 on international integration, and the master strategy for international integration to 2020 and vision to 2030. Based on the interpretation methods, the paper will explore and analyze the meaning of words in documents on the basis of the context of the document's issuance.

Additionally, articles published in the journals of international relations at home and abroad, newsletters from the Vietnamese representative missions abroad and reports from research institutes will be used as a data source. These databases, with a large amount of information, present different perspectives to help me gain a comprehensive view of the research problem, thereby making appropriate recommendations related to the process of planning and implementing this policy.

Chapter 5. Results

5.1. Process of forming and developing relations

The process of forming and developing international friendship and cooperation at the local level in HCMC can be divided into two main stages: (i) The period from 1975 to 1991, when ideology played a dominant role in the country's international cooperation, particularly in HCMC; (ii) From 1991 to present, when the whole country, including HCMC, expanded international cooperation for development.

The early 90s was chosen as the divisional period in the process of HCMC's building and developing international friendship and cooperation at the local level because this was a time of great domestic and international changes. Regarding the international situation, the collapse of the Soviet Union and socialist regimes in Eastern Europe erased the "two-pole" situation. This change had a significant impact on Vietnam's policy direction, including one in HCMC. Since 1986, Vietnam has launched a comprehensive Reformation. Regarding foreign affairs, the Resolution of the 6th Party Congress (1986) affirmed that cooperation with the Soviet Union was "a cornerstone of our Party and State's foreign policy," focusing on cooperation with socialist brotherhood countries. However, due to developments in the global situation and domestic demand, in 1988, the Politburo issued Resolution No. 13/NQ-TW on "Tasks and foreign policies in the new situation," showing the reformation of the Party's thoughts on key foreign affair issues, including the concept of "add friends, reduce enemies." Entering the early 1990s, due to the profound changes to the situation in the Soviet Union and Eastern European socialist countries, the National Congress of Representatives of the 7th Communist Party of Vietnam (1991) determined that the focus of foreign affairs is "Maintaining peace, expanding friendship and cooperation, creating favorable international conditions for the construction of socialism and protecting the country, and at the same time contributing to actively [participating] in the common efforts of the world for peace, national independence, democracy and social progress" (Communist Party of Vietnam, 1991). The Congress also affirmed the foreign policy that "Vietnam wants to make friends with all countries in the world community, as well as always strive for peace, independence and development." From here, Vietnam and HCMC began to take strong steps to expand relationships with many partners around the world.

In this section, for each period, I will explore and analyze the domestic and international context, Vietnam's foreign policy orientation and the orientation of developing international relations of HCMC through documents showing policies, guidelines and analyses on the socio-economic situation of the country as well as of the City, thereby analyzing the needs of the City in each period. This section will review the list of foreign local entities that have had friendship and cooperation with the

City through each period and analyze the desired goals to be achieved with partner groups as a basis for assessing the achievements and limitations of international relations at HCMC's local level.

For the period of 1975-2010, the City's integration mostly depended on the central government. Thus, I mainly used the secondary data for analyzing by using documents on policies, guidelines and foreign policies of the central and city's Party, the State and the orientation of HCMC that included resolutions of the 12th Party Central Committee, the Politburo, the Secretariat and the Prime Minister's Directive on international integration, etc.

From 2011 up to present, the integration has had so much changes with the willing and the activeness of the city. So I used both secondary data said above in combination with primary data including documents such as memorandums, official letters, emails, reports of visits and direct communication between the City foreign affairs agency and partner agencies in exporting, discussing, signing and implementing documents to establish friendship and cooperation between Hồ Chí Minh City and foreign local entities.

5.1.1. The period that ideology played a dominant role (from 1975 to 1991)

For this period, the City's integration mostly depended on the central government. Thus, I mainly used the secondary data for analyzing by using documents on policies, guidelines and foreign policies of the central and city's Party, the State and the orientation of HCMC that included resolutions of the 12th Party Central Committee, the Politburo, the Secretariat and the Prime Minister's Directive on international integration, especially Resolution 22 of the Politburo on international economic integration, the Prime Minister's Directive 15 on international integration, and the master strategy for international integration to 2020 and vision to 2030.

Regarding the international context, the 70s of the 20th century witnessed peace between major countries as they focused on the economic development race. There was reconciliation among the Soviet Union and America, the Soviet Union and Western European, America and China, and Western European and Japanese relations with China. However, China and the Soviet Union – the two “elders” of the Socialist bloc – were increasingly at odds. In Southeast Asia, revolutions in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia succeeded respectively, expanding the socialism system.

Vietnam, after achieving complete independence and reunification in 1975, began to enter the rebuilding process. The 4th Congress of the Party (Dec. 1976) identified foreign mission as “trying to take advantage of favorable international conditions to overcome the consequences of war and national development; in which priority was given to cooperating with socialist countries, protecting and developing special relations of Vietnam-Laos-Cambodia and ready to establish and develop friendly and cooperative relations with countries in the region” (Communist Party of Vietnam, 1977)

Meanwhile, Vietnam-China relations during this period deteriorated rapidly with disagreements about the border, Chinese Vietnamese and about the role of the Soviet Union in world and regional issues. In 1977, China declared that it was not ready to provide aid to Vietnam in the reconstruction of the country after the war (Chang, 1982). Also, in 1977, the US Congress passed the ban on aid to Vietnam after the first contacts on the possibility of normalizing Vietnam-US relations did not work. Subsequently, Western European countries suspended economic aid and tightened sanctions against Vietnam after Vietnamese soldiers voluntarily helped the Cambodian people overthrow the Pol Pot regime (January 7, 1979) and China invaded Vietnamese troops on the border between the two countries (February 17, 1979). Meanwhile, ASEAN countries – filled with concern and suspicion over the Cambodian situation – also implemented the policy to isolate Vietnam.

The country's socio-economic situation in this period was extremely difficult and Vietnam was left with only the Soviet Union and the socialist community as the country's sole support. Following the signing of the Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance between Vietnam and the Soviet Union (November 3, 1978), the 5th Congress of the Party (March 1982) determined comprehensive cooperation with the Soviet Union was the “cornerstone” of Vietnam's foreign policy and continued to focus on the special relationship between Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia, while also urging ASEAN countries to dialogue to build a peaceful and stable Southeast Asia at the same time. In 1975, after the South of Vietnam was completely liberated and reunified, Saigon was renamed Hồ Chí Minh City. The new government embarked on the restoration and development of the City. The central key task of this period was to build, develop, and protect the fledgling government against hostile forces. Therefore, the documents from the 1st (April 1977) and the 2nd (October 1980) Municipal Party Congress barely mentioned details on foreign orientation and objectives, but integrated it into the development and protection target of the City: Constantly promoting revolutionary vigilance, constantly consolidating national defense, preserving political security and social order (Vietnam Communist Party Committee - Ho Chi Minh City, 1977) and firmly protecting the City and contributing to strengthening national defense, ready to do international duty (Vietnam Communist Party Committee - Ho Chi Minh City, 1980). Thus, it can be said that the task of the City's foreign affairs was similar to the task at the national level to take advantage of favorable international conditions to heal the wounds of war, especially with countries with socialist communities.

The report of the Municipal Party Executive Committee, presented by Mr. Nguyễn Văn Linh, Secretary of the Municipal Party Committee at the 3rd Municipal Party Congress (January 1982), clearly stated that the purpose of foreign affairs was “contributing to the enhancement of friendship and international cooperation, first of all with the countries in the socialist community, especially the

Soviet Union, Cambodia and Laos” thereby “educating and improving enlightened socialist realism and a pure proletarian international spirit to the people of the City” (Vietnam Communist Party Committee - Ho Chi Minh City, 1983).

In the period after 1975 to 1990, HCMC had a sister relationship with four foreign local entities: Leningrad (Soviet Union), Leipzig (German Democratic Republic), Bratislava (Czechoslovakia) and Phnom Penh (Cambodia). These were all cities located in socialist countries. Ambassador Vũ Hắc Bồng – a senior diplomat, former Director of Hồ Chí Minh City’s Department of Foreign Affairs – shared his opinion that this was a period when twinning relationships were established for political purposes and ideology played an important role in selecting twin partners. The twinning with these local entities is now only found through the Municipal Party Congress documents from this period such as Document for Festival of the City Communist Party (Vietnam Communist Party Committee - Ho Chi Minh City, 1986).

The domestic and international situation in the years 1980-1990 began to have great changes. Regarding the international situation, in the late 1980s to the early 1990s, a serious political, economic and social crisis took place in the Soviet Union and a series of socialist countries in Eastern Europe. Governments ruled by Communist Parties in these countries were overthrown, the socialist regimes in these countries were abolished, and the Soviet Union disintegrated. Meanwhile, entering the early 1980s, Vietnam, including Ho Chi Minh City, fell into a serious socio-economic crisis. This crisis had been incubating since the late 1970s, after the days of reunification, and broke out strongly in the 1980s.

In this situation, the 6th Party Congress (1986) started a comprehensive reformation process; the economy changed from a centralized and subsidized planning mechanism to a socialist-oriented market economy, open to the outside. Implementing this orientation, from 1986, HCMC advocated strengthening international cooperation in order to “expand and improve the external economic efficiency – the spearhead of the City economy, serve the purpose of boosting exports; and promote the central role and position of the City in the region and the South of Indochina” (Vietnam Communist Party Committee - Ho Chi Minh City, 1986). During this period, the City still identified its main partners as the Soviet Union, Laos and Cambodia. Therefore, in relation to sister cities, the City focused on “having practical economic relations with [the] sister cities and provinces: Phnom Penh, Leningrad, Leipzig, Bratislava.” (Vietnam Communist Party Committee - Ho Chi Minh City, 1986).

Since 1988, besides implementing domestic reform activities, Vietnam has begun to diversify its foreign affairs partners. The 6th Politburo issued Resolution No. 13 (May 20, 1988) on “foreign affairs and duties in a new situation” with the theme of “maintaining peace, developing economy”

and emphasized the subject to “add friends and reduce enemies,” diversifying relations on the principle of respect for independence, sovereignty and mutual benefit (Mofa, 2002). The Resolution is considered to be a step forward in thinking about assessing the international situation, “redirecting our entire foreign strategy” (Mofa, 2002). Accordingly, the Resolution marked changes in the country’s foreign relations in general and in the relationship of international cooperation at the local level in HCMC in particular in the next period.

5.1.2. The period of expanding international friendship and cooperation for socio economic development (from 1991 to present)

5.1.2.1. The period of expanding international friendship and cooperation for socio-economic development (from 1991 to 2010)

Continuing the reformation of thinking in assessing the international situation of Resolution No. 13, the 7th Resolution of National Party Congress (1991) affirmed that “Vietnam wants to be friends with all countries in the world community, and always strives for peace, independence and development” (Mofa, 2002). This view continued to be promoted and expanded further in the next congresses. At the 8th National Party Congress (1996), the policy of “regional integration” and “global integration” were introduced for the first time (Mofa, 2002). The 9th National Party Congress (April 2001) stated the policy of “proactively integrating into the international economy to develop rapidly, effectively and sustainably” (Mofa, 2002). After that, during the 10th National Party Congress (April 2006), foreign affairs were oriented to not only to “proactively and actively integrate into international economy,” but also to “[expand] international cooperation [in] other fields” (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2006).

By implementing the general policy in the whole country, the city's external activities began to have remarkable changes. After the fall of socialist countries in the early 1990s, the sister relationships between HCMC and the four foreign local entities established between 1975 and 1990 gradually became blurred and were barely mentioned in documents as well as in reality. HCMC started to expand its reach further and diversify its partners. This policy has been expressed in Municipal Party Congress documents over the years.

Within five years, after the 5th (1991) to the 6th National Party Congress (1996), by implementing the policy of expanding partners, the City established friendship and cooperation agreements with five foreign local entities, respectively Shanghai (China) in 1994, Manila (Philippines) in 1994, San Francisco (United States) in 1995, Busan (South Korea) in 1995 and Guangzhou (China) in 1996. Most of the agreements/memorandum of establishing relations at this stage had general content and expressed the desire to enhance exchanges and cooperation in the fields of economics, culture,

education, and health, among others. Partners of the City in this period were mainly neighboring countries in Southeast Asia and Northeast Asia. A notable event during this period was the Agreement on Establishment of Friendship Relations between HCMC and San Francisco in April 1995, shortly after the two countries opened their liaison office in January 1995, even before the leaders of the two countries officially announced their decision to normalize diplomatic relations in July 1995. This move showed a pioneering role and demonstrated the agility and openness of the city in international exchange. The fact that HCMC partnered with San Francisco was a positive and symbolic move and contributed to promoting normalization of Vietnam-US relations.

By 1996, the number of consular offices located in the City doubled compared to 1991 (from 11 to 24); nearly 1,000 foreign company representative offices were located in the city and many friendship associations between Vietnam and other countries at the city level were established. The 6th Municipal Party Committee (term 1996-2000) identified “international cooperation to contribute to the expansion of Vietnam's cultural influence to the ASEAN region and the world” (Vietnam Communist Party Committee - Ho Chi Minh City, 1996). The 7th Municipal Party Committee (term 2000-2005) defined the goal of international cooperation as helping the City “create a position for proactive regional and international economic integration” (Vietnam Communist Party Committee - Ho Chi Minh City, 2000). Since then, for 10 years (1996-2005), the City continued to establish paradiplomacy with ten local entities in neighboring ASEAN countries and other regions, such as Lyon (France) in 1997, Rhône-Alpes (France) in 1998, Phnom Penh (Cambodia) in 1999, Shenyang (China) in 1999, Sverdlovsk (Russia) in 2000, Champasak (Laos) in 2001, Vienna Blanket (Laos) in 2001, Moscow (Russia) in 2003, Queensland (Australia) in 2005 and Saint Petersburg (Russia) in 2005. In the period from 1991-2005, on average, HCMC established international relations with one additional foreign locality each year.

The content of the majority of agreements during this period was still quite general, similar to the previous period. For the two French partnerships, after establishing the relationship, the two sides signed specific agreements detailing the priority areas of cooperation in each period, mainly focused on urban planning, urban transport, technical assistance, and training. For the two Lao partnerships, the content of cooperation focused mainly on strengthening the delegation exchange and supporting Laos in terms of the economy, education, and urban planning.

The 8th Municipal Party Congress (2005) identified the overall objective for foreign affairs as working to “proactively integrate in regional and international economy... gradually become a center of industry, services and science technology of Southeast Asia,” while the focus of international cooperation was “external relations among people and economic activities, paying attention to neighboring countries, strengthening foreign propaganda activities, promoting images of Vietnam

and the City as an attractive destination for tourists and foreign investors, having regulations on coordination between foreign affairs agencies and the Vietnam Union of Friendship Organizations and related agencies in external affairs...” (Vietnam Communist Party Committee - Ho Chi Minh City, 2005). It can be seen that the internal content stated in the 8th Municipal Party Congress Document was bold compared to the previous Congresses, showing the importance and clearer orientation for the foreign affairs of the city in the period from 2005 to 2010.

With this orientation, from 2005 to 2010, HCMC's paradiplomacy expanded rapidly with 12 foreign local entities including Toronto (Canada) in 2006, Geneva (Switzerland) in 2007, Osaka Prefecture (Japan), in 2007, Minsk (Belarus) in 2008, Vladivostok (Russia) in 2009, Barcelona (Spain) in 2009, Sevilla (Spain) in 2009, Johannesburg (South Africa) in 2009, Guangdong (China) in 2009, Yokohama (Japan) in 2009, Zhejiang (China) in 2010, and Al-Ahmadi (Kuwait) in 2010. Thus, on average, HCMC established international relations with 2.4 foreign local entities each year during this period, doubling the speed from 1991 to 2005.

It is noteworthy that in 2009 alone, the City established international friendship and cooperation with a series of partners (six paradiplomacy relations were established in 2009, accounting for ½ of the total number of relations established by the city in the 5 years from 2005-2010). Besides, 2008 was the year with increased inflation, and the city was affected by a financial and monetary crisis from the global economic recession, so the central task of the whole country and the City government was to control inflation, stabilize the macro situation, and ensure social security. Therefore, the rapid expansion of paradiplomacy relations in 2009 can be seen as expressing the desire of the City to diversify partners and looking to new export markets to cope with economic instability. However, most of the relations established in this year (except for Yokohama, Japan) had not been implemented well after the establishment.

5.1.2.2. The period of proactive in comprehensive international integration (2011- present)

It can be seen that the majority mentioned the content of strengthening economic cooperation when examining the contents of the signed documents to establish HCMC paradiplomacy relations in the period before 2011. It means the main factor that promoted HCMC to establish international friendship and cooperation with foreign local entities was the economic factor. Besides, there was also the factor of promoting friendship and mutual understanding through delegation exchange.

Entering the early years of 2010, the world had many changes. China developed dramatically and replaced Japan in being the second largest economy in the world in 2010 (Barboza, 2010). Meanwhile, strategic competition among major countries (Russia and Western countries, China and the USA) was constantly emerging, resulted deadlocks for bilateral and multilateral economic negotiations. That was why paradiplomacies at local levels had their own directions and strengthened

international cooperation to break the deadlock at the national level. Not only that, but the scientific and technological revolution was getting stronger. The trend of globalization and regionalization increased with the introduction of free trade areas.

Regarding the domestic situation, the macro-economy was gradually stabilized, the growth rate recovered, and social security was guaranteed. The 11th National Party Congress (January 2011) emphasized the policy of restructuring the economy, transforming the growth model with three breakthroughs (perfecting socialist-oriented market economy institutions; developing human resources; building a synchronous infrastructure system). The position and power of the country has increased significantly along with upgrading national-level relationship with many countries from neighboring countries such as Thailand, Indonesia, Philippines, Malaysia, Japan, Korea and so on to distant countries of England, France. Vietnam was witnessed as the first nation in ASEAN to sign the FTA with Eurasia Economic Union after two years of negotiation (from 2013), proving the potential of Vietnam market and the credibility of international community for Vietnam (Kwon, 2019).

In this context, foreign policy transformed greatly when the 11th National Party Congress decided to change from a “international economic integration” policy to “proactive and active in international integration” comprehensively, defined “diplomacy for the sake of the nation and the people”. The 12th National Party Congress (January 2016) concretized the contents of economic integration, political integration and multilateral foreign relations. The priority countries for foreign affairs under the National Resolution No.8 included Laos, Cambodia, China, ASEAN, USA, Russia, Japan, India, and South Korea (Central Party Propaganda Department, 2018).

In term of Hồ Chí Minh City, the city's foreign policy defined for the period 2010-2015 was “actively strengthening the Party's external affairs, the state's external relations, the people's external relations and the economic as well as sociocultural external relations; well implement the cooperation contents signed with foreign local entities, especially those of neighboring countries and important partners; expand economic-cultural cooperation with foreign sub-states; proactively prevent and minimize the negative impacts arising in the process of international integration” (Vietnam Communist Party Committee - Ho Chi Minh City, 2010). This was the first time the cooperation with foreign localities was detailed in the Resolution of the Municipal Party Congress, marking that the role of international friendship and cooperation at the local level had been recognized and implementing the commitments within the framework of paradiplomacy relations at the local level had been paid great attention by the Municipal authorities.

In 2012, the City issued an Action Plan for International Integration. By 2015, the 10th Municipal Party Congress (October 2015) continued to emphasize the importance of the effective deployment of international cooperation to “effectively and synchronously deploy foreign affairs of the city with

the State's external activities and people's diplomacy; enhance the renewal of propaganda activities, foreign information, and promote the image of Vietnam and the City to attract foreign and overseas investors to participate in developing the city and building the country. Perform well the content of cooperation signed with localities of other countries, continue to expand international cooperation, focus on the quality and effectiveness of the cooperation development. Proactively prevent negative impacts arising in the process of international integration. Keep well relations with overseas Vietnamese" (Vietnam Communist Party Committee - Ho Chi Minh City, 2015). The role of paradiplomatic relations continues to be well recognized in the Resolution. In addition to diplomacy serving the economy, external propaganda and foreign information were mentioned for the first time in the Resolution of the Municipal Party Congress. This policy paved the way for a series of foreign activities and cultural exchanges within the activities of international friendship and cooperation at local level of HCMC in the period of 2015-2020.

It took the city 19 years to establish relations with 27 foreign local entities (an average of 1.5 entities/year) in the period of 1991-2010. After changing to the "initiation and action in comprehensive international integration" policy and proactively promoting the effectiveness of paradiplomacy in the period of 2011-2019, the City established relationships with 26 entities in just over 9 years (average speed reached 3.2 entities/year, more than doubled compared to the 1991-2010 period).

In the last five years, from 2015 to 2019, the city established relations with 20 local foreign entities (an average of 4 entities/year), accounting for more than 1/3 of the total number of paradiplomacy relations that the City worked to establish for 44 years. These local entities are Osaka (Japan) in 2011, Almaty (Kazakhstan) in 2011; Yangon (Myanmar) in 2012; Budapest (Hungary), Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region (China), Shandong (China) in 2013; North Australia (Australia), Shiga (Japan) in 2014; Bangkok (Thailand), Leipzig (Germany), Moscow (Russia), Daegu (South Korea), Sofia (Bulgaria), Torino (Italy) in 2015; Aichi (Japan), Seoul (South Korea), Kosice (Slovakia) in 2016; Nagano (Japan), Incheon (South Korea), Gangwon (South Korea), Toronto (Canada), Gyeongsangbuk (South Korea) in 2017; Gyeonggi (South Korea), Savannakhét (Laos), Chongqing (China) in 2018; New South Wales (Australia) and Frankfurt (Germany) in 2019.

The quick development of the relationships with these entities was influenced by many factors.

First of all, it is the push of the Central Government, which is reflected in the comprehensive policy of "proactive and active international integration" at the 11th National Party Congress. From the late 2000s to date, Vietnam has actively promoted relations with other countries and established strategic partnerships with Japan, South Korea and Spain (2009), United Kingdom (2010), Germany and Italy (2011), Thailand, Indonesia, Singapore and France (2013), Malaysia and Philippines (2015), and

Australia (2018) respectively; as well as upgraded relations to the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership with Russia (2012) and India (2016). In particular, all Joint Statements establishing the Strategic Partnership and Comprehensive Strategic Partnership between Vietnam and other countries mentioned the national support for local cooperation activities. This is an important foundation, creating a basis for Vietnamese sub-states, including Ho Chi Minh City, to seek opportunities to promote international cooperation (11 among 15 countries establishing Strategic Partnership and Comprehensive Strategic Partnership with Vietnam having sub-state cooperation with Ho Chi Minh City).

The second driving factor is the City's political, economic and social needs. In terms of economy, Hồ Chí Minh City is the economic and financial center of Vietnam. Therefore, the need to maintain an open financial and trade network with international partners is huge. In terms of society, globalization promotes the movement of goods, capital and labor. Hồ Chí Minh City is not only a place to attract domestic labor but also foreign workers, along with the increasing presence of global economic institutions in the city. This creates a diversity in the city's residential community, which is a vantage point and also a driving force for the City to strengthen international connectivity.

Sub-conclusion: It can be said that, after a relatively cautious and closed period of international friendship and cooperation at a local level with socialist partners (1975-1991), from the second half of the period of expanding international cooperation (1991-2010) to the proactive comprehensive international integration (2011-present), the international friendship and cooperation at local level of the city has been constantly expanded in terms of number and speed of establishment. In addition to the rapid increase in numbers, cooperation activities have been increasingly diversified, bringing practical results, contributing to the implementation of national foreign policy and serving the City's socio-economic development. The next chapter will analyze in-depth the cooperation contents within the framework of the international friendship and cooperation at HCMC's local level, the achievements and the limitations, as well as analysis of the causes of the achievements and the limitations of the relationship.

5.2. Achievements and shortcomings of relationships

In this section, I used both primary and secondary data. Especially, for primary data, my analyzing was based mostly on in-depth interviews extensive survey (see survey result in Appendix).

For in-depth interviews, I did interview 13 people who are officials and experts who directly formulate, propose and implement policies on international friendship and cooperation at local level in HCMC (experts from the Department of Foreign Affairs and some relevant departments); officials and experts who directly formulate, propose and implement policies with foreign local entities having relations with HCMC (the focal department in charge of foreign affairs of foreign entities); officials

and experts at several Vietnamese diplomatic missions abroad, who are or have been directly promoting the relationship of international cooperation at the local level of HCMC. Some key result as follows:

Firstly, Out of 13 people interviewed, 9 agreed that Ho Chi Minh City is one of the leading localities in actively promoting international cooperative activities compared to other localities in Vietnam, typically the international relations between Ho Chi Minh City and the cities of countries such as: Gyeonggi, Incheon, Daegu (South Korea); St. Petersburg (Russian Federation); Shanghai (China); Lyon (France); Rotterdam (Netherlands); Torino (Italy).

There was an interview saying that Vietnam in general, and Ho Chi Minh City in particular, needed to overcome manpower issues if they wanted to further strengthen cooperative relations with foreign localities, such as the localities of the United States.

Secondly, about the achievements of Ho Chi Minh City in the process of substate/subnational international cooperation:

In term of politics: there are 10 of 13 respondents. After the survey interview, 100% of the respondents said that Ho Chi Minh City had more and more relationships, connections and cooperation with many international organizations, businesses and localities. Many localities in the foreign countries can be named such as: Rotterdam City (Netherlands), establishing cooperation with Ho Chi Minh City People's Committee in the field of climate change adaptation and water management (March 10, 2015); Busan (South Korea) and Ho Chi Minh City have established friendship relations (November 3, 1995); The two sides have agreed on measures to strengthen cooperation (September 15, 2004); Gyeongsangbukdo Province (Korea) and Ho Chi Minh City have cooperated to organize the Ho Chi Minh City-Gyeongju World Cultural Festival (2017); Daegu City (South Korea) and Ho Chi Minh City have established friendly cooperative relations (May 29, 2015); Inchoen City and Ho Chi Minh City have established friendly cooperative relations (May 16, 2017); San Francisco (USA) and Ho Chi Minh City have establish friendly cooperative relation (April 10, 1995); Lyon City (France) and Ho Chi Minh City have initially agreed on friendly cooperative relation (July 17, 1997); Saint Petersburg City (Russian Federation) has agreed on the establishment of cooperative relations with HCMC (09/12/2005); Torino City (Italy) and Ho Chi Minh City have agreed to establish friendly cooperative relations (September 8, 2015); Shanghai City (China) and Ho Chi Minh City have agreed to strengthen friendly cooperative exchanges (May 12, 2016), etc.

In addition, The city has actively participated in international cooperative activities, including annual activities such as the World Cities Summit, the World Mayor Forum, and proactively exchanged and cooperated with Vietnamese embassies in foreign countries, diplomatic missions and foreign agencies in Vietnam. Many foreign locality leaders of foreign countries often visit the city. These activities, in

addition to strengthening economic exchanges, also contribute to the development of tourism, cultural exchanges and people diplomacy. Currently, all foreign relation activities, especially investment promotion, are based on the plans and programs issued by the City People's Committee.

In term of Economy: 11 out of 13 respondents say that HCMC has reaped many positive aspects in the economic field (including 2 questionnaires not mentioning the economic achievements that Ho Chi Minh City has made out of the total 13 questionnaires).

The total value of foreign-invested high-tech projects in the City Hi-Tech Park has reached nearly US\$ 6 billion, the production value of high-tech products of the High-Tech Park in 2018 reached US\$ 14.160 billion, up 125% compared to 2017. FDI enterprises have also transferred advanced production technologies, contributing to improving the quality of goods and services, helping the city's economic structure shift in line with the birth and development of the knowledge economy;

The logistics sector has also experienced a positive change due to the active participation of FDI enterprises with VND 34,360 billion in production value of transport, warehousing and communications, an increase of more than 30 times in 30 years since 2015 (figures of 2015);

The total retail sales of goods of FDI enterprises have increased sharply year by year. Ho Chi Minh City is the economic leader, the largest FDI attractor in the country (mainly in real estate and service sectors).

In term of culture - Society: There are 2 out of the total number of questionnaires identifying many positive aspects in the field of culture - society that Ho Chi Minh City has achieved in the process of cooperation with foreign localities.

Thanks to the cooperation with many localities in Korea, namely Gyeonggi, Incheon and Daegu (the number of localities in Korea is based on the results of the survey interviews), Ho Chi Minh City has brought to the city in particular, and Vietnam in general a lot of support in terms of scholarships, health care, and education from the South Korean localities mentioned above, notably cooperation in building the network of smart urban areas between Ho Chi Minh City and Gyeonggi City.

In addition, according to the information from the survey interview with Vietnamese diplomatic experts in Korea, there are currently more than 90,000 Koreans living and working in Vietnam in general and Ho Chi Minh City in particular. The city was also in a mutual assistant cooperative relationship with Lyon city (France) in an urban lighting project.

Ho Chi Minh City has received experience shared by experts from Rotterdam City (Netherlands) on water management, exchanging experience on technology, ways of planning and managing clean water sources. This is one of the projects that Ho Chi Minh City is focusing on researching to face serious shortage of clean water in the next 50 years.

Thirdly, about the shortcomings of Ho Chi Minh City in the process of substate/subnational international cooperation:

In term of politics: 2 out of 13 questionnaires have profound assessment of the political limitations of Ho Chi Minh City in substate/subnational international cooperation with other countries.

The mechanism is still cumbersome, inflexible for units carrying out foreign relations and promoting investment cooperation such as regulations on the number of days in the work areas ... which greatly limits the quality and effectiveness of cooperation between the parties.

Although the activities have been clearly oriented, they have been only short-term, lacking a medium and long-term vision to meet the long-term development goals of the City. The implementation of Ho Chi Minh City's substate/subnational international cooperative relations is also affected by policies and guidelines from the central government and leading agencies in promoting cooperation between localities (for example, Lao PDR has Departments of Foreign Affairs with this task, but there is no specialized agency in the United States);

The quality of the relations is not really deep and mostly concentrates in Asia - Pacific and Northeast Asian regions, has not been promoted intensively in the relations with Europe and North America partners. The City has not actively sought partners, in most cases, the partners actively propose signing a cooperation agreement with the City. However, there is still a bright point, that is the city has recently proactively proposed to sign a cooperation agreement with Frankfurt, promoting financial aspects: specifying in the document that if 02 years go without any specific project, the agreement will automatically terminate.

There is a questionnaire saying that the manpower in charge of promoting the relationship between the US (particularly San Francisco) and Ho Chi Minh City is not large, moreover, these few people are not so interested in promoting the cooperation between the two sides. If these people retire, there will be no one to promote twinning relationship between the two.

In term of economics: there are 2 out of 13 respondents): The financial resources between the two localities are still limited, leading to many ideas of cooperation between the City and the foreign localities unable to be implemented (This comment was collected from 2 out of 10 survey questionnaires).

In term of culture - Society: There are 2 out of 13 survey questionnaires saying that the areas of cooperation are not wide and deep: mainly in small scale, in culture and education; many partners still do not have specific projects (same common limitations of other localities, other ministries and agencies).

5.2.1. Achievements

Normally, the evaluation of the effectiveness/achievement of a policy is based on an assessment of the impact of the results obtained – both short-term and long-term – to see if the policy objective has been achieved as expected or not. Within the context of the research, the City’s achievements of the integration and cooperation with foreign localities will be assessed on the basis of the following criteria: (1) ways to identify partners and field areas of cooperation in suitability with the development needs of the City, specifically stated in the resolutions of the City Party Congresses; (2) the cooperation commitments of both parties have been fully implemented in reality; (3) the resources that these relationships bring to the development of the City (both quantitatively and qualitatively). During the evaluation process, the percentage of criteria applied for each specific partner case will be different because normally, the objective of establishing each relationship is different. Based on the objectives when establishing the international integration and cooperation relationship, I temporarily divide the relationships into two groups as follows:

➤ **Group one:** relationships primarily for political and security purposes. This group includes relationships with Laos, Cambodia and China. These are countries that have special political relationships with Vietnam and have geopolitical positions that are very important to our national security and defense. Therefore, establishing relationships with these localities focuses on strengthening the neighborhood relationships, enlisting the affection and support of partner localities for Ho Chi Minh City in particular, and for Vietnam in general.

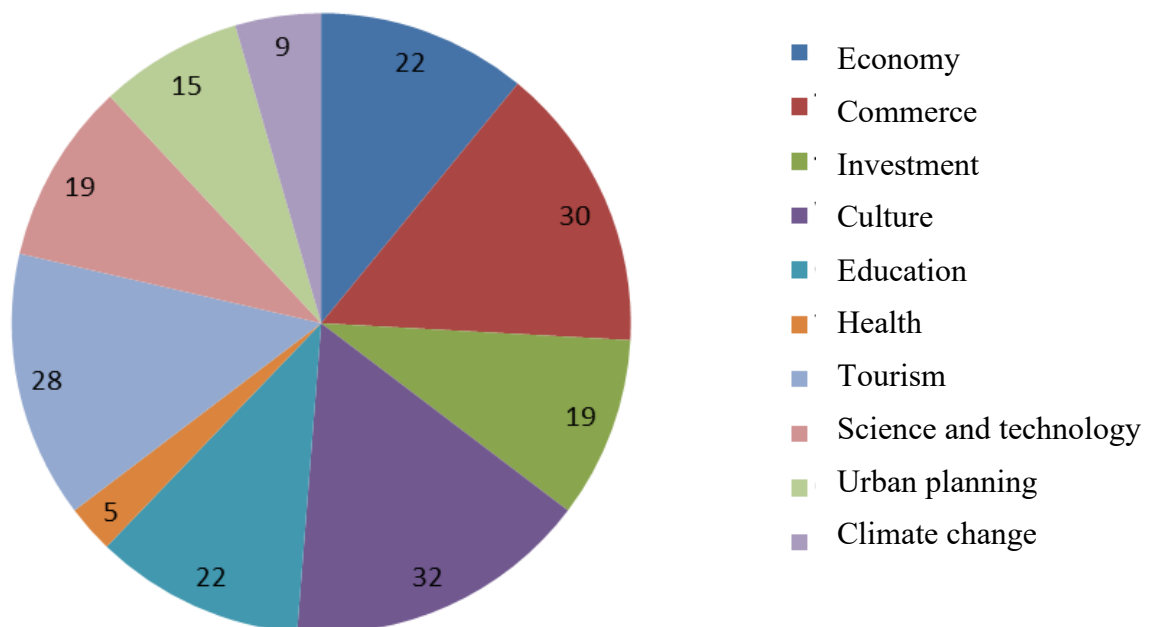
In relation to the localities in Laos and Cambodia, the cooperation activities are currently a one-way support from Ho Chi Minh City through socio-economic, education and training development projects and charity-social activities.

For the localities in China, the relationship in recent years has primarily been the exchange of leadership delegations, cultural exchanges and people’s friendship in order to enhance mutual understanding and trust.

In recent years, the City has gradually directed relationships with localities in Laos, Cambodia and China to the content of economic cooperation on the basis of equality and mutual benefits, in addition to continuing to strengthen the cooperation for political purposes and national security.

➤ **Group two:** relationships primarily for the sake of socio-economic interests. Relationships in this group account for a large proportion of the total number of current local-level international integration and cooperation relationships, spreading over five continents/areas: Asia, Europe, Africa, America and Oceania. This is a group of partners with supplemented strengths that have many resources that actively and proactively promote cooperation programs, bringing socio-economic and cultural benefits and society for the City.

In general, it can be said that the cooperation and integration relationship is an important channel to build up in order to promote the image of the City. The measurement of a City's international influence is often based on the following criteria: the organization of international events (fairs, exhibitions, sporting events); the presence of the media and international figures and the volume of tourism in the City; and international air and railway connections (Speed B., 2014). Based on these criteria, it can be said that international cooperation expansion in general, and strengthening cooperation and integration with foreign localities in particular, is an effective way to increase the City's scope of international influence. The tendency to decentralize international relationships and the relentless dynamism of localities around the world to find different playgrounds and channels of cooperation means that an increasing activeness in foreign relationships, particularly relationships with foreign localities, is an indispensable requirement for the City.



Statistics of major cooperation areas in Ho Chi Minh City's agreements on establishing integration and cooperation relationships with foreign localities.

Source: Statistics of Ho Chi Minh City Department of External Relations

5.2.1.1. Politically

5.2.1.1.1. Ho Chi Minh City's local-level international integration and cooperation relationships, especially the relationship group primarily for political and security purposes, has contributed to the implementation of national foreign policy

Ho Chi Minh City's local-level international integration and cooperation relationships have contributed to promoting the country and people of Vietnam, improving understanding, and building

trust, thereby proving that Vietnam is a reliable friend, partner and responsible member of the international community.

The relationships between Ho Chi Minh City and localities in Laos and Cambodia are a good example. These relationships have contributed to strengthening and tightening special relationships between Vietnam and Laos and the traditional friendship between Vietnam and Cambodia. Vietnam's influence in these areas has been strengthened in relation to four main aspects: (i) supporting political resources (experience, funding, etc.), (ii) training current and future leadership, (iii) developing social infrastructure, and (iv) building up affection in the hearts of host people through charitable activities. Regarding the human resource training: since the establishment of integration and cooperation relationships with the first Cambodian locality (Phnom Penh in 1999) and the first Lao locality (Champasak province in 2001), the City has granted more than 600 full scholarships for Lao students, organized training courses in Ho Chi Minh City and Laos on professional skills for nearly 800 Lao officials and civil servants, and granted more than 120 scholarships to Cambodian students attending universities in the City. The majority of these students are children of current officials in Laos and Cambodia and are expected to serve in the government after returning to their homelands. Hopefully, they will become a bridge for the long-term friendly relationship between the City in particular, Vietnam in general, and Laos and Cambodia. City hospitals and specialized health facilities have also trained and improved the profession for nearly 200 doctors in Vientiane, Champasak and Phnom Penh.

Regarding social infrastructure development: the City has provided financial support to build many projects in Lao and Cambodian localities, thereby enhancing the image of Vietnam's presence. These projects include giving financial and technological support to upgrade hospitals and build television broadcasting stations in Attapeu province (Laos), building and equipping libraries in Xieng Khouang province (Laos), and building a working office for the Party Committee and Government of Hua Phan (Laos). Projects in Vientiane, Laos include building the Vientiane-Ho Chi Minh City Friendship School, upgrading the Tax Financial-Data Center of the Vientiane capital, and building the headquarters of the Vietnamese Association. In Champasak province projects include building a Cultural Center, supporting the Champasak province in building a "Strategic Orientation for Sustainable Development of Champasak Province to 2015, with a vision to 2020," and planning for the development of the Pakon Area and Memorial Area for the late President of Cayson Phomvihan. Projects in Phnom Penh include building Cho Ray Hospital with a scale of 500 beds and a total investment of \$42.37 million US – currently one of the 5 largest and most modern hospitals in Phnom Penh (Cambodia). Other projects include building a working headquarters for the provincial

government of Kampong Thom (Cambodia) and building a guest house for the military sub-area and the command of the special military region in Phnom Penh (Cambodia).

Regarding charity-social activities: the City's socio-political and charitable organizations (Fatherland Front, City's Youth Union, Red Cross Association, and Poor Patient Sponsoring Association) have built nearly 100 loving houses in Laos, organized nearly 200 gift-giving trips, and free eye surgery for more than 15,000 poor blind people in Laos and more than 30,000 poor blind people in Cambodia. Since 2002, the City's Youth Union has begun to organize annual Pink Holidays, bringing Ho Chi Minh City youth volunteers to do social work in localities in Laos and Cambodia that have integration and cooperation relationships with Ho Chi Minh City. Additionally, Ho Chi Minh City has a mechanism to welcome and sponsor retired cadres of Lao localities to visit and resort annually in Ho Chi Minh City and neighboring localities. These activities all contribute to fostering the affection and appreciation in the host people, helping to enhance the good image of Ho Chi Minh City in particular and Vietnam in general in the hearts of the host people.

In general, support and cooperation with the localities in Laos and Cambodia has created a foundation, contributing to strengthening solidarity and friendship, and has become a driving force for comprehensive cooperation between Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. Ho Chi Minh City and localities in Laos and Cambodia also have a broader, more comprehensive and long-term vision for developing long-term relationships that reach beyond the national level and do not just focus on pure and short-term economic benefits. This awareness not only helps Ho Chi Minh City's cooperation activities to be highly appreciated by the leaders of the localities, especially those in Laos, but also builds and consolidates space for cooperation for the deployment of the nation's foreign policy towards Laos and Cambodia.

For Chinese localities that have integration and cooperation relationships with Ho Chi Minh City, the City maintains a regular exchange of leadership delegations (usually from the Secretary/Deputy Secretary, President/Vice President of City People's Committee levels) and cultural exchanges to enhance mutual understanding and build trust.

For the United States, the City focuses on lobbying the government of San Francisco, California (where most of the Vietnamese-American community is gathered) to make positive moves to contribute to the Vietnam-USA relationship. One example is from 2004, when the City contributed to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to lobby the San Francisco City Council not to pass a bill recognizing the flag of the Vietnam Republic regime. In 2008, for the first time, the Vietnamese flag was pulled up at San Francisco City Hall on Vietnam's National Day. That was the result of campaigning from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the sister cities, which directly originated at

the Consul General of Vietnam in San Francisco and former Director of the Department of External Relations of the City, and happened with the support of the mayor of San Francisco.

The above results show that in addition to the state diplomacy channel, the external activities at the local level, specifically the international integration and cooperation relationships, are a significant additional channel that contributes to the implementation of foreign policy, strengthening bilateral relationships to contribute to the achievement of state diplomacy channels.

5.2.1.1.2. Local-level international integration and cooperation relationships have contributed to empowering the City's international position and influence and are an important channel to build and promote the City's image.

Up until now, the City has had relationships with 53 localities on five continents, many of which are centers of international eco-finance, science and technology like Shanghai, San Francisco, Geneva, Frankfurt, and Seoul.

The City's confidence in joining international relationships is due to the strong links from local level cooperation and integration relationships with large centers in the international community. After establishing sister cities with localities from the socialist bloc, the City has gradually been proactively expanding partners, deploying cooperative activities, and organizing regular promotional activities. Through local-level international integration and cooperation relationships, the City has had access to the resources of international localities, and has participated in initiatives, forums, and bilateral and multilateral cooperation projects initiated by localities that connect and expand the network of relationships, not only with localities to which the City has direct contact, but also with other international localities. The City is gradually participating more actively in international life. The number of international delegations visiting and working in Ho Chi Minh City has increased steadily over the years (110-140 inbound delegations each year). Promotional events organized by foreign partners in Ho Chi Minh City have increased rapidly in both number and scale; events promoting Ho Chi Minh City are held in foreign localities with increasing frequency and are considered to be effective. The event "Ho Chi Minh City Days overseas" has become the City's own brand and is welcomed by many foreign localities who are willing to cooperate with Ho Chi Minh City in organizing the event. This process has appeared in line with Vietnam's foreign policy adjustment (analyzed in Chapter I) and the increasing role of the Asia-Pacific region as a dynamic, emerging center of global growth.

From the less ambitious objective set out in 1986 for foreign affairs – "properly promoting the roles and central position of the City in the region and the southern part of Indochina" (Resolution of the City 4th Party Congress, 1986-1991) – the City has gradually expanded its relationships from Southeast Asian countries to ASEAN and five other continents. Many foreign localities have actively

approached to propose relationships with the City. The City, with the consideration of the effectiveness and necessity, has rejected many relationship establishment proposals. The process, from a gradual and exploratory level, has shifted to an extensive and confident status. If, in the beginning, cooperation activities between the City and foreign localities primarily stopped at the exchange of delegations, now cooperation activities have been diversified in form, specific in content, and increasingly essential.

5.2.1.2. Economically

According to the Department of External Relations' statistics, in 66 commitments written in the framework of Ho Chi Minh City's, 52 state local-level international integration and cooperation relationships, 51 documents mention the trade sector, 40 documents mention investment fields, 47 documents mention tourism fields, and numerous documents mention information updating the favorable condition creation for businesses on both sides to learn about each other's markets.

Thus, it can be said that the economy (trade, investment, tourism and business) is the City's most important and traditional objective when establishing relationships with foreign localities. This is in line with the thorough foreign relationship orientation that City leaders put forward from period to period, showing that the City's international cooperation and integration relationships have been established in the right direction.

In general, economic commitments under the framework of local-level international cooperation and integration relationships have been actively and transparently implemented in order to contribute to increasing investment flows, boosting exports and increasing the number of foreign tourists to the City and investment opportunities for City businesses.

The economy is a key sector implemented by the private sector and, in many countries, it is difficult for the government to influence businesses' decisions in selecting investment locations, methods, models and trade exchanges. The foundation of good relationships between authorities through regular consultation mechanisms, website links, and document updates regarding investment/trade/tourism policies is a positive message from the City to investors, businesses, and people in foreign localities.

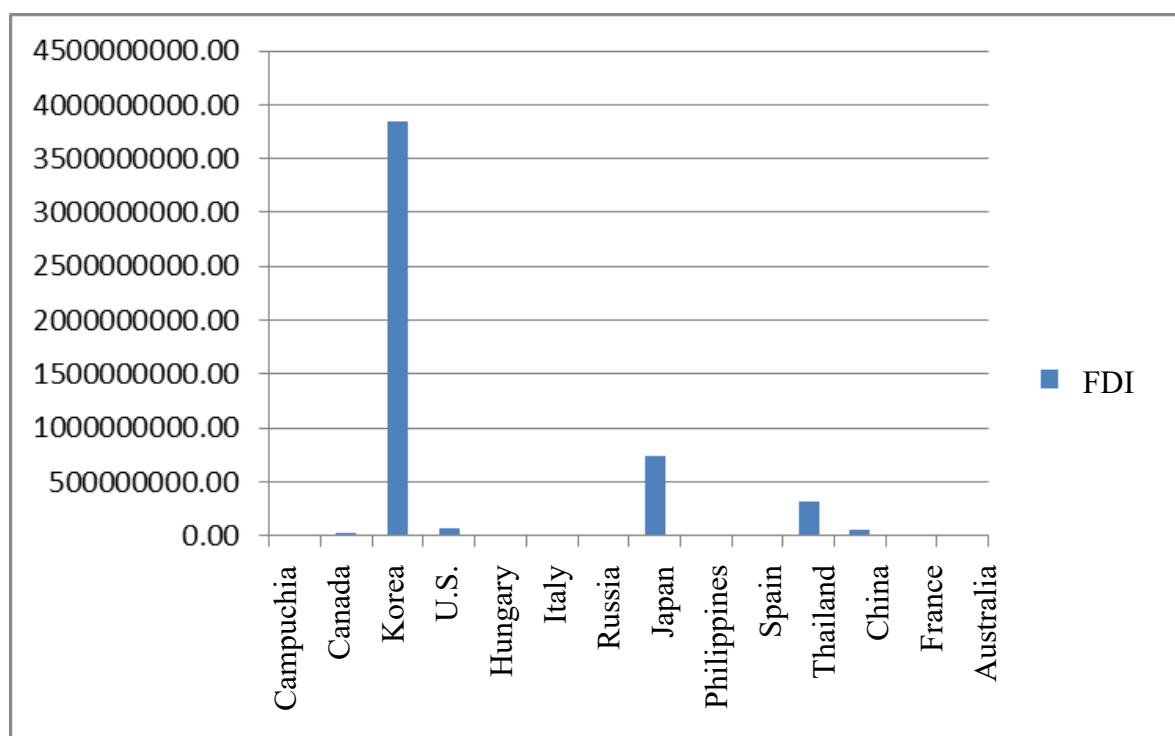
The contents of cooperation have been conducted through various channels such as seminars, investment promotion conferences, and special working groups, creating favorable conditions for businesses to accompany the City leaders to visit foreign localities, attend events connected to foreign businesses within the framework of the trip, and facilitating meetings with foreign local leaders to discuss solutions for problems related to exploring investment and business opportunities and hearing about the promotion and preferential orientation of foreign localities. These activities open up diverse cooperation opportunities for City businesses. For instance, the Ho Chi Minh City House project in

Saint Petersburg was facilitated by the Saint Petersburg government and provided clean land and preferential land rental rates for investment enterprises. The Yangon government (Myanmar) facilitated the provision of information to City businesses to participate in the auction of a land plot in the Yangon Center (which was formerly reserved for the administrative offices of the capital and was left vacant after these agencies moved the new capital in Naypyidaw). Some twinning cities such as Moscow, Saint Petersburg, Yokohama, and Osaka have affirmed that they would give preferential treatment on location and land rental rates if the City wished to establish a trade-investment office in their localities.

The City regularly organizes promotional events in partner localities to expand the market for City goods and attract investment and foreign visitors. These events have been coordinated and consulted by partner local governments both in terms of location and organization to suit host tastes. Since 1991, the City has held 20 promotional events abroad, about half of which took place in twinning cities in Laos and Cambodia (trade promotion) and key areas of promotion of the City/localities in Japan, Korea, and the United States (investment and tourism promotion. The promotion fields have been regularly updated in line with the different markets).

Beyond organizing events abroad, the City also regularly cooperates with partner localities to organize promotional events in the City (fairs, events for trade connection, investment, information exchange, provision, etc.). The City's trade and investment promotion agency has established a regular cooperation mechanism with many promotional agencies from the City's local partner governments to work together to research and organize appropriate and effective promotional activities. A number of representative offices for host trade, tourism and business associations (Rhone-Alpes, Daegu, and Gyeongsangbuk, etc.) act as representative offices for these localities in the City, through which activities of information exchange, delegation exchange, and business connection at the local level take place quickly and effectively.

According to the 2018 HCMC Department of Planning and Investment statistics, FDI from localities having international cooperation and integration with the City is more than \$5 billion USD, accounting for a significant proportion of the total FDI capital from the countries of these localities into the City. Investment capital from Korean localities was the highest with nearly \$4 billion USD, followed by Japanese localities with nearly \$750 million USD (Korea's total FDI into the City was \$4.9 billion USD and Japan's was \$4 billion USD).



The total FDI from localities with international cooperation integration relationships into Ho Chi Minh City 2019 (Aggregate by country, unit: USD).

Source: Department of Planning and Investment

According to the 2018 statistics of the Department of Industry and Trade, Ho Chi Minh City's import and export turnover with localities in 6 countries that have established integration and cooperation relationships with the City (and of the top 10 key export markets) also accounts for about 59% of Ho Chi Minh City's total export turnover. Similarly, according to the statistics of the Department of Tourism in 2018, the number of visitors from localities in 7 countries that have established integration and cooperation relationships with the City (and of the top 10 key tourism markets) accounts for 54% of the City's international visitors. Interestingly, the list of countries and localities in these two rankings is almost the same, showing that the effectiveness of cooperation on investment, trade, and tourism is highly concentrated on a few partners (notably, localities in Japan and Korea).

Although the aforementioned data can only be retrieved by country and not by locality, it can show that the City's relationships with foreign localities have been focusing on economic, trade and tourism benefits.

This result is also consistent with the results of in-depth surveys and interviews conducted by my team. Accordingly, more than 40% of people surveyed believe that local-level international integration and cooperation relationships helps promote FDI inflows into the City, contributing to

deepening the City's international cooperation in the field of economy-culture-education; 75% of the in-depth interviewed experts agreed with this statement (*in-depth surveys and interviews sources*).

NO.	Market	Import-Export turnover (Unit: 1.000 USD)
1.	China	19.222.834
2.	USA	7.648.367
3.	Japan	5.048.354
4.	Korea	4.736.169
5.	Thailand	3.161.608
6.	Germany	2.080.284
7.	Total import-export turnover between the City and the six countries above	41.897.616
8.	Total import-export turnover of the City	71.610.151

Import - export turnover of Ho Chi Minh City in 2018.

Source: Department of Industry and Trade

NO.	Name of countries	Number of visitors
1.	Korea	934.489
2.	China	893.577
3.	USA	689.066
4.	Japan	558.356
5.	Australia	396.381
6.	Thailand	202.341
7.	France	192.616
8.	Total visitors from the seven countries above	3.866.826
9.	Total number of international visitors to Ho Chi Minh City	7.200.000

Number of international visitors to Ho Chi Minh City in 2018.

Source: Department of Tourism

Thus, it can be said that the economics (trade, investment, tourism and business) are the traditional cooperation objective that the City places the highest priority on since establishing relationships with foreign localities. This is consistent with the thorough foreign relationship orientation that City leaders set out from period to period, showing that the City's international cooperation and integration relationships have been established in the right direction.

5.2.1.3. Regarding urban management and sustainable development

The achievements of local-level international integration and cooperation relationships in the field of urban management and sustainable development are reflected in the increasing commitment to the needs of the City, which chooses to establish relationships with appropriate partners and deploys commitments in an increasingly proactive, effective manner. This affirmation is partly confirmed by the results of in-depth interviews of Ambassador Vu Hac Bong, former Director General of HCMC Department of External Relations, Mr. Le Quang Long, Director General of HCMC Department of External Relations, Me. Vu Anh Quang, Ambassador of Viet Nam to Belgium; and surveys from may team (24 % shows this idea in the surveys).

In 2000, the Resolution of the First Party Congress mentioned “protecting [the] environment, [and] developing science and technology” as one of the City's overall objectives. By 2002, the City defined more clearly sustainable development as one of the overall objectives and tasks to promote “rapid, efficient and sustainable economic growth...to build Ho Chi Minh City more and more civilized, modern, gradually becoming the center of industry, services, science and technology of Southeast Asia...” (Resolution of the City 8th Party Congress, 2005-2010). In 2010, the objective of sustainable development was concretized into many connotations, in which, for the first time, the task of protecting the environment and corresponding to climate change was stated in the Resolution of the City's Party Congress' fast and sustainable development with the general objective of developing synchronous infrastructure, building a healthy cultural environment, environmental protection, and proactively corresponding to climate change (Resolution of the City 9th Party Congress, 2010-2015). In this spirit, the fields of cooperation in infrastructure, urban planning, heritage protection, environmental protection, flood control, clean water supply, waste treatment, and sustainable development are almost stated in documents signed in the early 2000s between Ho Chi Minh City and partner localities.

It can be said that although appearing relatively late compared to political or economic cooperation, the frequency of cooperation commitments on urban management and sustainable development is quite dense. According to the Department of External Relations' statistics from the contents of 66

written commitments within the framework of 52 of Ho Chi Minh's local-level international integration and cooperation relationships, 38 documents mention the field of science and technology, 33 documents mention the field of urban planning, and 28 documents mention the environment and responses to climate change (anti-flooding, saline intrusion, water treatment, etc.). Toward the objectives of cooperation in this field, the City has selected and promoted integration and cooperation relationships with appropriate partners from the Netherlands, Japan, Germany, France, and Italy such as Rotterdam, Amsterdam, Osaka, Yokohama, Leipzig, Frankfurt, Rhone-Alpes, and Lyon.

In spite of being "new," cooperation on urban management and sustainable development has been actively implemented by the City and its partners. In addition to capital, technology, and experience in operating models, planning, public policies, and project implementation are important points that the City has shared and learned from the local-level international integration and cooperation relationships. The deployment of these commitments also creates momentum and helps accelerate cooperation activities in the field of human resource development for the City.

In fact, urban management and sustainable development are challenges not only for the City but also the globe. Finding and sharing solutions is now an effort of the international community, including developed localities. It is this similarity and common purpose that gives the City the opportunity to take advantage of the cooperation and international resources (knowledge, technology, experience and solutions).

Through local-level international integration and cooperation relationships, many City officials have had the chance for three- to six-month short-term internships at foreign administrative offices to establish relationships with their focal point officials and gain a clearer understanding of the operating mechanisms of the host government apparatus. The internships also provide the opportunity to participate in urban management training courses in foreign countries in order to acquire new knowledge and better understand the strengths of the partner localities, thereby having a basis for proactively proposing cooperation projects later.

Partner localities have sent experts to lecture nearly 30 training courses on bus route management, exploitation and management of parking spaces, solid waste management, and urban planning. Partner localities from France conducted four technical consultancy and assistance programs in the City, giving comments on the planning tasks of the Thu Thiem new urban area. The total capital that the City has been financed from these cooperation programs is estimated at over 14 billion VND.

Cooperation on urban management between Ho Chi Minh City and localities with foreign partners is the model of Center De Prospective Et D'Etudes Urbaines À Ho Chi Minh Village (PADDI). The center was established in 2006 under the framework of cooperation between Ho Chi Minh City and the Rhone-Alpes region (France) with the main functions of promoting international cooperation with

Ho Chi Minh City in the field of urban management, advising Ho Chi Minh City on urban management, deploying training to City officials, and researching and prospecting the development tendency of Ho Chi Minh City. The Rhone-Alpes region fully financed the sending of experts and costs of PADDI's activity deployment; Ho Chi Minh City paid the technical costs of PADDI activities. Under the direction of two co-directors assigned by the Rhone-Alpes administration and Ho Chi Minh City, PADDI organized many training courses, scientific workshops, technical assistance programs, published books and documents related to urban development and planning in Ho Chi Minh City, and supported sending technical delegations from Ho Chi Minh City to France. Regarding urban aesthetics, the City of Lyon – another French locality – from 1997 to now, has enthusiastically provided technical support to Ho Chi Minh City and fully funded the costs of equipment, experts and techniques to carry out five art lighting projects for the City's architectural works including the Ho Chi Minh Museum, City People's Committee Headquarters, City Theater, City Post Office, and Fine Arts Museum (expectedly, the art lighting for the City Treasury shall soon be launched). The total amount of funding and equipment received by the City through these five projects is about 393,000 Euro and 2.2 billion VND.

One project focused on traffic is the “mobile communication station” between Ho Chi Minh City and Leipzig (Germany), under the sponsorship of the Local Development Cooperation Project Fund (NAKOPA Fund) of the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development. The objective is to build a digital connection station model to share information about transportation, connecting public service providers on a single network, resulting in a reduction in the amount of vehicles involved. The project will be implemented from October 1, 2019 to September 30, 2022 with a total implementation cost of 248,733 EUR, of which 90% is non-refundable support capital paid by NAKOPA Fund and 10% of the reciprocal capita is paid by the Leipzig City Government. Ho Chi Minh City supports the hiring of station construction workers, the cost of the project executives, and other technical issues.

In environmental protection and water management and use, Japanese localities have cooperated very closely and effectively with the City. Ho Chi Minh City and Osaka City signed a Memorandum of Understanding on the implementation of the Low Carbon Emission City Development Program for the period 2016-2020, alternately organizing the annual mayor dialogue on low carbon emissions and implementing specific programs with the participation of businesses in Osaka City. This shows both the seriousness in fulfilling the commitments of the two localities and reflects that the implementation of the governments' cooperation projects will create the foundation for the operations of local businesses. Osaka Province and Ho Chi Minh City deployed a program exchanging experiences on water environment in the period of 2008-2009. During the two years of the program implementation,

Osaka Province sent and paid all the expenses of 20 visits from Osaka experts to do the City's water environment survey and provided financial support for 15 visits for City officials to learn about the experience of clean water supply and wastewater treatment in Osaka.

In flood control and clean water supplies, Ho Chi Minh City has actively cooperated with Dutch localities (Rotterdam, Amsterdam) to implement many specific cooperation programs. The two localities have cooperated to develop and implement the program "Ho Chi Minh City development towards the sea adapting to climate changes" since 2011. Based on the results achieved through phase 1 (2011-2013) and phase 2 (2014-2015) of the program, the content of cooperation for the 2016-2018 period was discussed and agreed upon by representatives of the two cities at the Fifth Session of the Inter-Government Committee of Vietnam-Holland on climate change adaptation and water management. Accordingly, the City of Rotterdam will assist Ho Chi Minh City to conduct a feasibility study of the Khanh Hoi Regulatory Lake Construction Project in District 4 and improve the capacity of the City's officials.

5.2.1.4. Regarding socio-cultural aspects

Socio-cultural cooperation is the second most common area (ranked only after economic cooperation in frequency) mentioned in 32 of the 53 documents establishing cooperative integration relationships. This is in line with the foreign relationship orientation set out by the City Party Congresses, from "enhancing internal accumulation [while] addressing socio-cultural issues" (Resolution of the City 6th Party Congress, 1996 – 2000) to "[strengthening] social and technical infrastructure," (Resolution of the City 7th Party Congress, 2000-2005) to the objective of building "an increasingly civilized and modern Ho Chi Minh City, gradually becoming a center of industry, services, science and technology [in] Southeast Asia," (Resolution of the City 8th Party Congress, 2005-2010), "[striving] to build Ho Chi Minh City into a civilized and modern social City...building a healthy cultural environment," (Resolution of the City 9th Party Congress, 2010-2015) and "[associating] economic growth with cultural development" (Resolution of the City 10th Party Congress, 2015-2020).

In general, cultural and social cooperation activities have been carried out in a vibrant and diverse manner, making an important contribution to enhancing mutual understanding among localities, and paving the way for further professional cooperation contents.

The most common form of cultural cooperation is the organization of events promoting the culture of foreign localities in the City as well as events promoting the City abroad, starting with the "Busan Day in Ho Chi Minh City" (2004) and "Ho Chi Minh City Day in Busan" (2005), followed by "Rhône-Alpes Days in Ho Chi Minh City" (2007) and "Ho Chi Minh City Days in Rhône-Alpes" (2008). The statistic from the Department of External Relation – Ho Chi Minh City in 2019 showed that, so far, the City has collaborated with partner localities to organize nearly 20 "Ho Chi Minh City

Day” events abroad and nearly 30 events promoting foreign culture in the City. These events have attracted significant concern from the authorities and people. The concern originated in the need to promote a mutual understanding, the effects brought about by exchanges and promotions, and the host people’s need to explore different cultures.

In the first phase, the frequency of organizing these events is quite low (only one event was held every one or two years), but in the recent years events have increased significantly in both frequency and attendance. The increase is highly appreciated in terms of the professionalism in the organization and the pervasive effectiveness. My survey results vividly reflect this view with 83.1% of the survey correspondents assessed that the activities promoting foreign culture in Ho Chi Minh City were carefully and thoughtfully prepared with high efficiency, while 33% of the survey respondents said that the cultural promotion activities of Ho Chi Minh City abroad were carefully and thoughtfully prepared with high efficiency (*in-depth surveys and interviews sources*).

In 2018 alone, Ho Chi Minh City organized three cultural promotion events in partner localities, attracting a large number of attendees, including an event in Aichi (Japan) that attracted 200,000 attendees in just two days of its organization. The organization of this event received the active concern of the Ho Chi Minh City government, the Aichi government and Nagoya City (the metropolis of Aichi province). For the first time, the City appointed a foreign citizen – Ms. Noriko Hirose – to act as Ambassador of Ho Chi Minh City Tourism in Aichi, marking a more professional step in organizing the work. In 2017, the City coordinated with Gyeongsangbuk Province (South Korea) to organize the Gyeongju World Cultural Festival in Ho Chi Minh City for 23 days. The festival, with various cultural activities, attracted nearly four million visitors. Additionally, a record number of foreign-organized events in Ho Chi Minh City were voted as 10 typical events in Ho Chi Minh City in 2017 by the media.

In general, these activities have contributed to introducing the City in a positive way to the international public, specifically implementing the commitments that the City has signed with partner localities in accordance with cultural diplomatic strategies, and the objective of strengthening the City’s foreign relationship propaganda, laying the foundation for the City’s other international cooperation activities.

In addition to organizing promotional events, youth exchange activities are also an important component in local level international relationships, because they build understanding and friendship and create successive generations ready to inherit and promote bilateral relationships. The model of cooperation between Ho Chi Minh City and Osaka province (Japan) can be seen as typical in student-to-student exchange activities. Since 2016, about 90 students from Osaka and Ho Chi Minh City have participated in exchanges in both localities. Through document exchange programs, libraries in the

City have been supplemented with 5,710 books and magazines, and people have donated 1,650 books and magazines to libraries in foreign localities that have an integration and cooperation relationship with Ho Chi Minh City.



Vietnam festival in Aichi 2018 – Ho Chi Minh City – integration and development. (Source VOV)

In the context of the City's policy on developing into a smart and creative financial center of the country and region, educational cooperation has been included in 22 of the 66 Memorandums of Understanding signed within the framework of the City's local-level international integration and cooperation relationships and actively deployed in many forms. Recently, there were nearly 100 City officials taking part in short-term training courses abroad, sponsored by partner localities. The training and coaching primarily focused on the City's development objectives such as public administration, human resource management, creative start-ups, and high technology. About 2,000 City officials were invited to attend seminars on the application of information technology, public administration, e-governments, traffic management, and seaport development, organized or connected by local partner localities such as Busan, Yokohama, and Osaka (source: Department of External Relation – Ho Chi Minh City in 2019).

Cooperation in the health sector has also brought about remarkable results in the form of expertise assistance for the City's health center construction projects, technology transfer and competency enhancement for City health officials and personnel. Nearly 1,500 City health officials have participated in free training courses lectured by experts from France. 210 Ph.D. candidates, managers, and City doctors have been trained in France via a scholarship granted by the Rhone-Alpes region

and Lyon City. The training courses focus on diverse fields including biohealth technology, hygiene and pasteurization, pathological anatomy, and virology. The City has received more than 30 nurse and doctor training programs sponsored by organizations, hospitals, and training institutions in the Rhône-Alpes region (source: Department of External Relation – Ho Chi Minh City in 2019).

Beneficiaries of the health cooperation between Ho Chi Minh City and partner localities are not only at the government level but also hospitals and local people. Nguyen Tri Phuong Hospital conducted the exchange of 10 doctor and nurse teams, providing professional and expertise support to the Rhône-Alpes regional hospitals. French partners provided financial and professional support for the set-up of an outpatient emergency system at Trung Vuong Hospital and other City hospitals. The total support for costs of these activities is about \$225,000 USD and 357,700 Euro, not including the equipment and facilities sponsored for the testing facilities and the laboratories.

The Rhône-Alpes region supports Ho Chi Minh City in improving the emergency aid capacity at Trung Vuong Hospital (through HUMACOOP). Accordingly, thanks to financial support from the Rhône-Alpes region and CHU Grenoble, Trung Vuong Hospital and HUMACOOP have jointly built a first aid training unit (more than 30 people), specialized equipment, and capacity enhancement for health officials and related agencies (Red Cross Association and Fire Prevention and Fighting). Since the 1990s, the Center for Training and Retraining of Health Officials (now Pham Ngoc Thach Medical University) has welcomed students from medical universities in Lyon to do internships at the Center as well as introduced them to City hospitals. Since then, the City has welcomed more than 100 medical students from Lyon universities to do summer internships at hospitals like Tu Du Hospital, Children's Hospital 1-2, Hung Vuong Hospital, and Hospital of Tropical Diseases.

From 2018 to the present, the Incheon government in South Korea has carried out heart surgery for seven children from Ho Chi Minh City and neighboring provinces. Most of their families have financial difficulties and were unable to have surgery in Vietnam. The annual free health examination program for the poor by the Ami Charity health examination team from Busan University Hospital and the delegation of Busan doctors and dentists has been carried out annually since 2006.

In general, the City's educational and training cooperation programs with foreign partners are primarily professional training courses, short-term skill enhancements (except for scholarships granted by the City to localities in Laos, Cambodia), and health examinations and treatment for disadvantaged people. These cooperation activities enhance comprehensive relationships, understanding, and professional capacity and facilities for City agency officials. However, in these cooperation programs (except for Laos and Cambodia), the City's agencies and officials often play a role in receiving knowledge and support rather than extending stories of the City's experiences and

challenges, from which people could find suitable solutions to solve the challenges that Ho Chi Minh City is facing.



Incheon Government, South Korea sponsors heart surgery for poor children in Ho Chi Minh City and neighboring provinces. Source: Incheon Government

5.2.1.5. Other fields

In addition to the cooperation activities implemented by the City Government as a deploying subject, in recent years, the City's local-level international integration and cooperation relationship has also developed strongly and expanded into activities presided by the district level, specialized departments, and organizations. This shows the increasing initiative of these units after participating in civil servant exchanges, training courses, and exchange programs in Ho Chi Minh City's partner localities. This is also an indication that the City has the basis and foundation to diversify and increase resources for future foreign operations when units directly participate in the City's increasingly expanded international cooperation.

Within the framework of integration and cooperation relationships between Ho Chi Minh City, Busan (South Korea) and the capital city of Vientiane (Laos), District 1 and District 5 of the City have established cooperation relationships with Yeon-je District (Busan) and Sikhottabong district (Vientiane), reflecting a degree of "osmosis" in the City's international relationships.

In addition to district-level cooperation, City unions and associations (City Union, Women's Union, and Construction Science and Technology Association) have also actively exchanged and established relationships with partners under the framework of local-level international integration and cooperation relationships. Sydney University of Technology, Auckland University of Technology,

Victoria Wellington University, and New Zealand Education Agency initially cooperated with the Universities of Ho Chi Minh City (Hoa Sen University, Ton Duc Thang University, etc.) in the field of human resource training for Ho Chi Minh City.

Sub-conclusion: Based on the evaluation criteria mentioned at the beginning of this part, one can see that the local-level international integration and cooperation relationships network has achieved important achievements in three aspects: (i) the identification of partner cooperation fields through each stage is suitable to the City's development needs and can be deployed in accordance with the guidelines set by the City for foreign affairs; (ii) many cooperation commitments with partner localities have been fully, positively and effectively implemented in practice; (iii) the resources that these relationships bring about are very important, both qualitatively and quantitatively, and actively contribute to the City's development objectives, while also promoting the City's international image, giving the City confidence in international interaction, and bringing the necessary external resources for the City to develop in all fields of trade, investment, tourism, urban management, sustainable development, culture, education, health, and society.

The "traditional" areas of cooperation, like trade, investment, culture, and tourism, continue to play a key role in mobilizing external resources for the City's development. Some areas of cooperation on urban management, sustainable development, education, health, and society, though "born late," have gradually confirmed the importance that they bring (in terms of raising awareness, experience sharing, and training). The expansion of the cooperation fields from "traditional" to "fresh" is partly an inevitable result of the City's deep integration process and partly originating from the City's intrinsic needs and demands in the development process when economics was not the only indicator measuring the level of development and people's satisfaction with City government. Additionally, the experience and understanding of the City's administration mechanism in these "fresh" areas is and will be helpful in solving various urban and environmental problems. Sustainability is gradually becoming an important criterion for evaluating development strategies and visions of localities and countries around the world. Therefore, in the coming time, the later fields (urban management, sustainable development, education, health, and society) really need to be promoted.

5.2.1.6. Causes of achievements

5.2.1.6.1. The political determination and the care of top leaders of Ho Chi Minh City to the foreign affairs

As stated in Chapter I, international cooperation has been a consistent and thorough City policy since the Doi Moi period, expanding from Southeast Asia to partners around the world. Cooperation with foreign localities was gradually affected by the City government in parallel with the process of

development in thinking and awareness of foreign relationships and with the process of increasing investment attraction and promoting different forces to build the City.

As an economic, cultural, scientific and technological center of the country, Ho Chi Minh City is where economic and cultural diplomatic activities take place at both the local and national level. Participation in these activities gives the City's authorities and leaders the best access (compared to other Vietnamese localities) to foreign models, methods and tendencies, helping foreign affairs to be a "standing" topic in City development programs. International integration and cooperation relationships with foreign localities have been expanded and enhanced in this context.

Besides, it can be affirmed that the City's leaders, throughout the periods, have been concerned about foreign affairs as said by Mr. Le Quang Long, Director General of Department of External Relation – Ho Chi Minh City in the in-depth interview. Chairman of City, Mr. Nguyen Thanh Phong determined that "foreign affairs has become an important pillar, in addition to the political, economic and cultural pillars, in order to effectively serve the development needs of the City." This cross-cutting concern manifests itself in various aspects. In terms of executive assignment, in recent consecutive years, a Standing Vice Chairman of the City People's Committee was assigned to direct the City's foreign relationship activities; the title as Director of Department of External Relations for many years has been structured as a City Party Member; the City's top leaders always give priority to the schedule of foreign affairs (every year, the City's leaders welcome over 140 delegations, attend over 50 external events, and welcome nearly 400 international visitors). The City has always proactively proposed cooperation with foreign partners and closely coordinated with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Central ministries to organize thoughtful and important national diplomatic events in Ho Chi Minh City. Fresh City leaders always give priority to visiting localities that have an integration and cooperation relationship during their first trips abroad to take advantage of the existing cooperation framework, considering this content as necessary for promotion.

In addition to the concern from the City leaders, the leaders of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs are also clearly aware of Ho Chi Minh City's international exchange focal point roles and have always given concern, cooperation and support to the foreign relationship activities of the City (in welcoming foreign delegations, assisting in arranging the working program for the City leaders in foreign countries, consulting the City in dealing with foreign affairs, and inviting the City to participate in events with foreign partner connections). This is a fundamental advantage that not many localities have.

The promoted external relationships of the provinces in Vietnam in general and in Ho Chi Minh City in particular reflect two tendencies that seem to be opposite but are actually closely linked together. On the one hand, the local level external relationships reflect a relative decentralization in Vietnam's

foreign relationships when foreign relationships are no longer the prerogative of Central agencies. On the other hand, the development of communication, transportation, and human resources in the process of implementing international cooperation activities at the local level to create the foundation for strengthening the country's external relationship network connection for information sharing, exchange, coordination, reporting, etc. has been shortened and further standardized. The two-way interaction creates obligations and opportunities for the City as well as localities across the country to promote their local-level integration and cooperation relationship channels.

5.2.1.6.2. The characteristics of foreign affairs agencies in Ho Chi Minh City under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Unlike the foreign affairs agencies in localities nationwide that are directly under the local government, HCMC Department of External Relations – the agency in charge of consulting and implementing external activities of the Party Committee and the City Government – is a department-level agency directly under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, not only in charge of Ho Chi Minh City's foreign affairs but also assigned by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to consult with leaders on uniformly managing foreign affairs in the south (from Quang Nam province and Da Nang City to Ca Mau).

The HCMC Department of External Relations has an organizational structure like a miniature Ministry of Foreign Affairs with specialized units in charge of specific tasks (reception, politics, consular work, etc.). The Department personnel is recruited, trained and enhanced by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as per general Ministry standards. It is a dual model both directly under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and under the direction of the City People's Committee (mofahcm.gov.vn), so the Department of External Relations of Ho Chi Minh City has a foundation to effectively combine the roles of a Central agency with the role of a local agency, taking advantage of the resources and strengths of these two management bodies in implementing foreign affairs at the national and local level.

The dual model of the Department of External Relations has helped the City proactively and promptly coordinate actions with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, exchange information smoothly with the network of Vietnamese representative missions abroad, and take advantage of experiences and manpower from foreign relationship focal points to receive and deploy effective cooperation programs with foreign localities.

5.2.1.6.3. The role of the consular corp in Ho Chi Minh City

Apart from the capital of Hanoi that has a large number of diplomatic missions, Ho Chi Minh City is the only city in Vietnam with a rich number of consular offices (Da Nang has only 3 consulate general offices for Laos, Russia and China). The presence of 28 consulate generals headed by a professional

consulate, 33 consulates headed by honorary consulates, 16 representative offices for international organizations, economic and cultural offices for countries and territories, and 20 foreign business associations in the area has helped the City to have more instant and effective communication channels with foreign localities, facilitating the coordination between the City and foreign partners in deploying political, economic and cultural diplomacy activities.

The consulates are an important and instant channel for the City to approach the international community and exchange and consult information in cooperation with foreign localities. As a foreign representative agency in the City, in addition to protecting citizens and legal entities, the important task of consular offices is to strengthen cooperation with the City. The demands come from both sides (City and consular offices), so the two sides often find common points of view through potential cooperation projects.

Many consular offices have been playing a very active role in introducing appropriate partners to the City; providing information on the strengths of partners, customs, practices, negotiation practices and regulations of host countries on the integration and cooperation relationship establishment process; advising the City in the event that a partner locality changes the government and priority order in the relationships; and adhering to a successfully implementation of the committed projects/programs.

5.2.1.6.4. Ho Chi Minh City's "self" attraction to the international community

Ho Chi Minh City is located in the heart of Southeast Asia. An increasingly improved roadway, waterway, and sea and air transportation network connects the City to the region and the world in a vast and profound way. Most major cities and localities in Asia that have close economic, commercial, cultural, and tourist relationships with the City are located within a five- hour flight to the City (from the City, there are many direct flights to localities in Japan, South Korea, China and ASEAN countries; the frequency of direct flights to localities in the region is increasing). International flights to Europe and the Americas also better connect the City to the rest of the world. Saigon – the “Pearl of the Far East” – is widely known in the region and around the world. Over the past 30 years since the Doi Moi period, the City's economy has increased on average by 10.7% per year, 1.6 times the national average. The City's labor productivity is always quite high – an average of 2.7 times nationwide. Currently, the City accounts for about 1/3 of all businesses in Vietnam. With a population of more than 10 million people, the City's workforce is about 4.5 million – of which about 1.3 million laborers have a higher education degree. A relatively developed education system (80 universities and colleges with more than 600,000 students and 120,000 graduates each year) helps the City to have a large market size and abundant human resources as a foundation for activities of investment attraction, expansion, and service enhancement. The achievements of the reform,

innovation and economic development have made the name Ho Chi Minh City popular in international relationships.

It can be said with the advantages of geographical location, human resources, and open economy, along with foreign activities conducted over many years to proactively promote the image, the City is gradually building its reputation and brand in the region and the world. Many localities consider cooperation with the City to be the focus in their relationships with foreign localities.

In the context of a US-China trade competition, Vietnam – a country that is actively integrated deeply into the global economy, a model that emphasizes connectivity and interdependence – will have advantages when American companies in China start eyeing alternative markets and see Vietnam as one of the top choices. Many large companies and corporations around the world are operating under the “China + 1” formula, a strategy in which businesses often find another country to reduce their dependence on China. In addition to its China-adjacent geographic location and stable political background, Vietnam has also made an impression with its recent free market-oriented reforms, helping to create high and stable growth rates.

In conjunction with this, the government of Vietnam has signed 16 free trade agreements with other countries and regions (including 12 FTAs already in effect) (www.trungtamwto.vn). Currently, Vietnam and the EU are working together to promote the completion of procedures so that they can officially ratify and put into effect the Vietnam-EU Free Trade Agreement and the Vietnam-EU Investment Protection Agreement. With the CPTPP Agreement taking effect on December 30, 2019, Vietnam will also have the opportunity to raise its position in the region and create an open and favorable investment environment, thereby attracting more international partners. This regional and international context has contributed to bringing Ho Chi Minh City, the core of Vietnam’s economic development, into becoming the “favorite” locality of foreign localities.

In general, it can be seen that all four reasons mentioned above have made an important contribution to the achievement of the City’s local-level international integration and cooperation relationships. Among them, the research team assessed that the City’s self-attractiveness (including geographic location, development achievements, workforce advantages, and popular “brand”) is the most significant factor in expanding the City’s relationships with the international community in general and with foreign localities in particular. Although a number of mechanisms and procedures are not open (including administration, tax, customs, and investment environment), in recent years, along with political determination, direction and administration of the City leaders, the level and intensity of relationship development with the localities for its integration and cooperation has been very strong, in which direct communication channels between localities have been continuously promoted. This platform shows that, if well utilized (through reasonable management and policy mechanisms),

the effectiveness of the City's local-level international integration and cooperation relationships can be further promoted.

5.2.2. Shortcomings

5.2.2.1. The initiative of Ho Chi Minh City in searching for and selecting partners and developing relationships is still low

The overwhelming majority of Ho Chi Minh City's local-level international integration and cooperation relationships are set up from the initiative proposed by the foreign localities. The City only plays the role of the local "respondent," although the initiative of the City is increased through the process of cooperation. Specifically, 47 of the 52 local-level international integration and cooperation relationships have been established stemming from the initiative of the partner localities. Almost all cooperation projects, especially projects with France, Japan and the Netherlands, are initiated by those countries themselves. At the end of March 2019, Gangwon Province (South Korea) proposed a cooperation plan that included seven projects with Ho Chi Minh City, while the City had almost no specific projects to propose to them. Only in May 2019 was the first local-level international integration and cooperation relationship (with Frankfurt, Germany) established from a proactive selection, proposal and signing from Ho Chi Minh City.

Many agreements just stop at cooperation framework and lack of specific implementation plans. The agreement is not only is with partners, but bilateral relationships have not been developed widely and extensively. Even with countries that have good relationships with the City, not many specific initiatives have been discussed or implemented, except for with Cambodian and Lao localities.

Some local-level international integration and cooperation relationships have been established as a form of "political gifts," not based on additional strengths, so after establishment, no true benefits are received (for example, the establishment of a relationship with Minsk City in 2018 proposed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; with Almaty City, Kazakhstan made on the occasion of the President of Kazakhstan's visit to Vietnam in 2011; and with the City of Seville, Spain established in 2009 on the occasion of the visit of Vice Chairman of the City's People's Committee to Spain – most of these localities do not have specific cooperation programs with the City). However, this is not really a real "drawback" because, as mentioned above, the local-level international integration and cooperation relationships contribute to building a foundation for economic, commercial, cultural, and tourism relationships not only in the present, but also in the future. Assessing a relationship, therefore, should not only look at past or present achievements. The vision of the City is not and should not be limited to immediate objectives. The City needs to build a backup space for development and growth in the future.

However, insufficient activities with localities having integration and cooperation relationships in the short term could be interpreted by potential partners as the City being less likely to implement commitments, resulting in a reduction in enthusiasm or more caution in considering establishing an integration and cooperation relationship with the City. This means, on one hand, the City needs to continue expanding mutual relationships while this expansion must be balanced with implementing existing commitments.

5.2.2.2. The partner system is still not diverse

Nearly 60% of the partners that have integration and cooperation relationships with the City are located in Asia, 42% of which are in northeast Asia. Other regions such as the Americas and Africa are still quite modest – only 2 localities in the Americas and 1 region in Africa have integration and cooperation relationships with Ho Chi Minh City. The lack of relationships with the Americas is because the cooperative activities within the framework of local-level international integration and cooperation relationship are not promoted by the countries' governments, but instead are assigned to non-governmental organizations that mobilize socialization for implementation, so there are no available resources to strengthen relationships. For Africa, geographical distances and underdeveloped trade relationships are reasons why cooperation relationships have not been opened. In terms of quality, relationships with Asian localities, including Laos, Cambodia, South Korea, Japan and China, have developed stronger, more vibrantly and more effectively than those with other countries and regions.

5.2.2.3. Some relationships are still not really effective, many activities are still formal

The quality of deployment and efficiency in cooperation projects between Ho Chi Minh City and partner localities, although large in number, is still uneven. For example, eastern European localities – including Hungary, Bulgaria, Kazakhstan, and Russia – although accounting for a relatively large number of relationships (10 localities – more than 20% of Ho Chi Minh City's total local-level international integration and cooperation relationships), have not deployed any specific cooperation projects. Similarly, for some other localities (such as Seville and Barcelona, Spain; Geneva, Switzerland; and Johannesburg, South Africa), although the potential for cooperation is great, almost no bilateral projects have been discussed specifically. This can be considered the “clinical death” status of relationships, said Ambassador Tran Quang Dung, former Director General of External Relations Department – Ho Chi Minh City (*in-depth interview source*).

In most of the City's local-level international integration and cooperation relationships, the “friendship” content is generally higher than the “cooperative” content. However, the balancing tendency is gradually increasing due to the process of accumulating experience, knowledge, methodology, and efficiency that the City has been building. This comment is based not only on the

name “friendship [and] cooperation” of relationships, but in fact, based on the signing and implementation process (as mentioned above).

The organization of promotional activities in the form of festivals has not been highly effective if compared to the co-relationship of organizational funding, which mainly takes place in localities where the cities have close relationships and have not been widely organized in partner localities, and largely due to funding issues in the context that the City is focusing on key areas. Promotional publications should be more carefully prepared, and the form of introduction should be more diverse (for example, exhibitions, seminars, and specialized introductions involving cuisine or art) in order to improve quality and maximize promotional results in the coming time.

5.2.2.4. Causes of the shortcomings

5.2.2.4.1 The insufficiency of the specific strategies and objectives when setting up and deploying relationships

The City has hardly identified the core benefits, strategies and priorities of local-level international integration and cooperation relationships. There have been no specific objectives for each twinning locality, no “focal point,” so no initiative has been proactively raised in the progress of deploying these relationships. From a policy perspective, the City has not had a strategy of developing comprehensive, extensive and worthy external relationships. Although there have been guidelines and policies to implement the country’s external foreign policy, there is no annual foreign relationship plan, and a long-term and comprehensive plan defining the focus of each international cooperation segment, including local-level international integration and cooperation relationships, is still missing. Because these contents have not been clearly defined, the City is still confused and lacks synchronization when implementing new projects. Some agreements were signed in a hurry and have no essential significance.

Learning about partners before signing agreements on potential projects, policies, and cooperation priorities has not been methodically implemented. As of 2019, establishing a relationship with foreign localities was mainly proposed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The City has not proactively looked for suitable partners with which to exchange and sign cooperation agreements.

On the other hand, a position as beneficiary and resource user gained through local-level international integration and cooperation relationships has not been showing the necessary activeness in raising initiatives and implementing follow-up cooperation activities in addition to considering the foreign affairs duties of the Department of External Relations’ business to be their own duties, said Mr. Le Quang Long, Director General of External Relations Department – Ho Chi Minh City (*in-depth interview source*). The majority of cooperation projects are carried out passively. Very few related agencies actively seek solutions and resources for internal difficulties. Many wait for foreign

localities to raise initiative instead of co-chairing the process, which reflects the psychology of asking/giving, and is one way local-level international integration and cooperation relationships are in the process of international cooperation with the City, making foreign partners less excited and enthusiastic.

Survey results showed that most of the units did not proactively propose cooperation projects (most of the respondents answered that there were no cooperation results or only listed the signed documents; some units provided cooperation results but were general and did not mention specific localities).

5.2.2.4.2. The insufficiency of resources and coordination mechanisms to monitor and promote relationships

The City still doesn't have budget or mechanism for building and promoting integration and cooperation relationships. Outside of the foreign relationship budget allocated for the reception of incoming delegations, organization of outgoing delegations, and organization of foreign relationship events in the City, the City has not allocated funding for the deployment of international cooperation projects while many projects require reciprocal capital from the City as a prerequisite for implementation. This is partly due to the absence of a mechanism, and partly due to the absence of an action and development plan for a local-level international integration and cooperation relationship development strategy. The lack of financial resources to the City's local-level international integration and cooperation relationship status is still spreading, depending heavily on the partner's resources. This is especially true when the roles of both side's governmental administrative divisions are not really prominent. Ms. Tran Thi Hieu Hanh, former Vice Consul General of Vietnam in San Francisco, former vice Director General of External Relations Department – Ho Chi Minh City shared that the HCMC-San Francisco (US) relationship is standard for this case (*in-depth interview source*). Experiencing many ups and downs, the San Francisco-HCMC relationship plays a more symbolic role in diplomacy and politics than in economics and trade. The partnership does not have the resources to carry out cooperation activities with the City. Limited resources have restricted bilateral cooperation in many different ways.

The City lacks a mechanism to assess, review and urge the situation of signing and implementing agreements with partner localities, especially at the department and sector level. There is no database on local-level international integration and cooperation relationships, so the inheritance and promotion in cooperation projects is not high, especially when there is a change of personnel in charge of relationships or projects implemented with partners. The City has not established a framework for reporting, summarizing and evaluating cooperation activities with partner localities, so it has not

created motivation and sanctions for related units in the process of implementing commitments and in utilizing external resources for City development.

5.2.2.4.3. Concerns about legal regulations

Name and concept

The name “integration and cooperation relationship” has not been specifically defined. Vietnam advocates the use of the phrase “friendly cooperative relationships” to refer to the official relationships between Vietnamese and foreign localities. However, for foreign localities, the phrase “cooperative friendship” does not express the specific nature, significance and importance of the relationship as well as the phrase “twinning” does. The majority of foreign localities do not have a form of integration and cooperation relationship. For some other localities, integration and cooperation relationships are a kind of lower-level relationship compared to a “twinning relationship.” The procedure for establishment is simple and not the promotional focus of that local government. For example, the state of New South Wales (Australia) has regulations that use the term ‘twinning relationship’ to refer to a partnership with a foreign locality through the establishment of a written agreement. In the process of negotiating with the City to sign a Memorandum of Understanding, New South Wales earnestly wished the City would keep the term “twinning relationship,” indicating that if the Memorandum uses the term “cooperative friendship relationship,” the priority and resources that the state government has for this relationship will be lower than in a “twinning relationship.” However, due to Vietnamese regulations, after consulting with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ho Chi Minh City decided to use the term “cooperative friendship relationship.” Another example of the above conceptual differences is the relationship between Ho Chi Minh City and Chinese localities. According to Chinese regulations, there are two forms of local-level international cooperation, including “twinning” (1st grade) and “friendly cooperative exchanges” (2nd grade). When establishing relationships with Chinese localities, Ho Chi Minh City uses the phrase “cooperative friendship,” translating it into Chinese as phrase “friendly cooperative exchanges.” Based on this relationship name, the Chinese side doesn’t consider an integration and cooperation relationship to the City as a priority in their foreign relationship activities and therefore have not enthusiastically promoted that relationship. In their conferences that gather the “twinning cities,” the reception ritual for Ho Chi Minh City representatives is less formal than that for their “twinning” localities. Thus, the difference in the names results in differences in the understanding between the City and partners, in terms of the nature as well as the importance of the relationship.

Procedures of signing MOU

Ordinance No. 33/2007/PL-UBTVQH11 created April 20, 2007 by the National Assembly Standing Committee, discusses signing and implementing international agreements requiring localities to

report and consult with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs before local leaders sign any document with foreign partners. This regulation helps to review local-level commitments to ensure compliance with the orientation and guidelines of the central government, helping localities get the necessary consultation before signing an international agreement. However, with a large volume of similar documents requiring consultation from sectors and localities, the response time of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is often slow. Additionally, the provisions of this ordinance do not allow agreements with similar content and form to be “automatically” approved. They still have to carry out the application process from the beginning, causing the procedures before signing to be time-consuming.

Lack of regulations on the order and procedures

Despite being very tight in terms of procedures for signing international agreements, Vietnam is currently lacking regulations on the order and procedures of establishing local-level international cooperative friendship relationships. There has been no regulation adjusting non-precedented cooperation activities such as a civil servant exchange or setting up a representative office for a foreign locality in Vietnam and vice versa. For example, the government of Busan, South Korea was eager to promote the exchange of civil servants to work at each other’s agencies. Although the City sent two turns of civil servants to Busan under this program (working for six months in Busan in 2005 and 2009), the City could not then accept the civil servants of Busan to work in the City due to Vietnam’s lack of regulations arranging foreigners working in state administrative agencies. Therefore, the civil servant exchange program between Ho Chi Minh City and Busan ceased in 2010. Currently, some Korean localities including Daegu and Gyeongsangbuk have representative offices in Ho Chi Minh City in the form of Provincial Business Associations offices (because Vietnamese law still does not stipulate the opening of representative foreign locality offices in Vietnam or the opening of local representative offices of Vietnam abroad). Similarly, Saigon Satra Trading Corporation’s representative office in Osaka, Japan also acts as Ho Chi Minh City’s representative office in certain cases, such as supporting City leader visits or helping connect businesses.

5.3. The prospective of relationship development for stage 2020-2025.

In this section, I used in-depth interviews source for analyzing in combination with other document from primary and secondary data. Through the in-depth interviews, I found that 7 out of 13 respondents have made predictions about the future international cooperation trends. Their main ideas focused on carrying the city’s active initiatives in international cooperation. They take the case as an example that Vietnam and the European Union (EU) recently signed 2 Free Trade Agreement (EVFTA) and Investment Protection Agreement (EVIPA) on June 30, 2019 in Hanoi. Through this, the economic products of the two sides are not competing but on the contrary, complementing each other. Therefore, Ho Chi Minh City needs:

- + To focus on further developing trade - investment - tourism promotion activities in localities of 28 EU countries.
- + To maximize the conditions and attractiveness in the context of many EU businesses investing in Vietnam.
- + To pay attention to the purchase of modern equipment and machinery for the intensive integration with European countries. This is also a special attraction to European businesses to operate locally.
- + To focus on small but profound projects. For example, the urban lighting project with Lyon City (France). Not to focus on too many projects, which ultimately lead to the inability to develop any project effectively.

Thus, the ideas prove that the city's willing, activeness is the most important factor, both in selecting partners in accordance with the central diplomacy line and in various fields of cooperation in which economic, trade, tourism and so on need to be put as the city priority.

However, as said, for Ho Chi Minh City, I need to consider more sources of data besides in-depth interviews and extensive survey to analyze the perspective and to predict the tendency in line with the political system of Vietnam and the city's policy within next 5 years.

5.3.1. Context and general tendency

The global development tendency, in period of 2020-2025, is to continue towards a multi-polar system; no country has the ability to control practically the entire field of international life. The main characteristics in the relationships between countries are to cooperate, compete, and restrain each other, in which cooperation is mainstream, diversifying, multi-lateralizing, economic boosting, and a way to avoid confrontation and conflict.

The economy has become a decisive factor in the synergy of the nations and localities and the main driving force in the tendency towards globalization and anti-trade protectionism. In the context of the rapid development of the science-technology revolution, countries recognize that the most urgent issue is to make every effort to utilize all internal and external resources to develop the economy, promote inter-local economic cooperation, develop sustainably, and respond to global challenges (Minh, 2012).

In such a general context, the City identified the overall socio-economic objectives of the City in the following periods as "accelerating administrative reform, building [an] e-government, improving the effectiveness and efficiency of State management; continuing to effectively implement the National Assembly's Resolution No. 54/2017/QH14, project plan for constructing Ho Chi Minh City become a smart city and seven breakthrough programs of the City; improving the quality of growth and the competitiveness of the City economy in association with economic restructuring...encouraging

innovation, creative startups, business development; innovative new urban area building; developing synchronous infrastructure system associated with urban embellishment, reducing traffic congestion, traffic accidents, reducing flooding, reducing environmental pollution, proactively coping with climate change;...increasing investment in cultural, education, training, health care activities for people, ensuring food safety and hygiene, providing clean water for people; expanding foreign activities and international integration...” The Congress set out seven breakthrough programs that need to be implemented in the 2015-2020 term.

In the in-depth interviews of my team, experts and professional diplomats all said that in order to develop the City’s international cooperative friendship relationships practically, with focus and core, it is necessary to pay attention to serving the development needs of the City (*in-depth interview source*).

5.3.2. Prospective of relationship development tendency for stage 2020-2025.

5.3.2.1. The initiative of Ho Chi Minh City has increased in identifying and selecting partners

In in-depth interviews, most of specialists affirmed the tendency that the City is gradually carrying its active initiatives in international cooperation (*in-depth interview source*).

Previously, the City accepted most proposals for setting up international projects by foreign parties. Recently, the City government has begun carefully considering cooperation proposals based on the City’s needs and determined the focus and effectiveness of each proposal. The government temporarily refused establishing relationships with some foreign localities, although they actively proposed, including Minsk (Belarus), Casablanca (Morocco), Santiago de Cali (Colombia), and Sao Paulo (Brazil).

Additionally, in the past, the City was often passive with proposing cooperation to partners. In the past two years, the City has proactively proposed twinning relationships with many localities around the world from provincial to district levels. Starting at the end of 2018, the City has concretized the policy of gradually developing into the country’s financial center as well as Southeast Asia. Based on this need and a survey on the strengths of international regions to choose from, the City proactively proposed signing a Memorandum of Understanding with the City of Frankfurt am Main (Germany) and proposed bringing the finance field into the list of focusing areas in cooperation between the two localities. These City proposals were welcomed by the Frankfurt government. The two localities officially began an integration and cooperation relationship in May 2019. It can be said that this event officially marked the City’s efforts in the process of proactively seeking partners and proactively giving the “topic” for the cooperation. This tendency will increase as the City’s development needs,

priorities, and focusing areas become increasingly transparent. This will be the orientation for the City when choosing local partners.

The initiative of the City in international cooperation in general is also reflected in careful preparations to increase the actual effectiveness of the City's business trips abroad. Every year, about 30 business delegations travel abroad, led by City leaders (from the levels of the Standing Committee of the City Party Committee and the Vice-President of the People's Committee or higher). Often, selected areas are neighboring countries with special ties (Laos), countries with traditional relationships (Cuba, Cambodia, and Russia); countries that are the City's important development partners with experience in building creative, smart cities and financial centers (Japan, Korea, Singapore, USA, UK, Germany, and the Netherlands); startup partnership countries with high-tech science (Israel, Australia, New Zealand, and Finland); countries with strengths in education, environmental protection, and waste treatment (Finland, Sweden, and Japan); and countries with new markets that call for investment and attract capital (UAE and Kuwait). Participants in these trips are very selective and compact and are mainly from departments and agencies directly related to the purposes of the business trips. Prior to the business trips, the City's top leaders instruct the departments and agencies to propose specific cooperation needs, identify partners in the areas visited, and prepare details for the discussion. The contents of discussion, working within the framework of the trips, are arranged in a high frequency. The contents are carefully prepared to ensure that effectiveness is achieved. After each trip, each of the departments/agencies in the delegation, in addition to contributing to the overall report of the trip, are also assigned to make separate harvest reports on the areas in which they are in charge, and reports on specific plans to deploy the content agreed with the partner.

It can be said that the foreign trips of the City leaders have always been well-prepared, the content has always been studied closely, and suitable locations for field trips, visits, and the right partners have been carefully selected. The results have oriented and brought specific cooperation projects in finance and technology, providing important reference knowledge for the City in planning related projects and policies (creative urban areas, start-ups, and responses to climate change). The content and agenda of the business trips are built in a practical and proactive manner, closely following the foreign relationship needs and development orientation of the City. The working sessions with domestic and foreign partners (foreign representative offices, international organizations in Vietnam, Vietnamese representative offices in foreign countries, research institutions, and the business community) take place before and after trips have been carried out more methodically, stemming from the awareness that the partners are both motivating force and important cooperation partners. The City has received effective support from these partners in important and large-scale projects and

events such as the Workshop on Investment Models in the form of Public-Private Partnership, HCMC Economics Forum 2018 on the topic of creative cities, and the Ho Chi Minh City Economic Forum 2019 on the topic of financial centers.

5.3.2.2. The connotations of urban management, science and technology, and sustainable development are increasingly high in the field of cooperation

The results of the questionnaires and interviews with experts and City foreign policy makers said that the tendency of the City's local international cooperation should increasingly deepen, serving the development needs of a City larger than 10 million people (urban management, science and technology, health education, environmental protection, and sustainable development).

Apart from traditional cooperation fields such as economics, culture, and society, connotations of urban management, science and technology, and sustainable development have attracted attention and accounted for the content of a majority of the signed documents in last five years.

In 2019, the Memorandum of Cooperation on a cooperative friendship relationship between Ho Chi Minh City People's Committee and Frankfurt City Government (Germany) was signed in which the two sides would promote cooperation activities between the two parties relevant in each city. Priority was given to the fields of economics, information technology, investment, trade fairs, science, environment, climate, and tourism, regulating that "this Memorandum of Understanding takes effect from the date of signing and will automatically renew after every one (01) year [and] expires when the two parties fail to carry out cooperation programs for two consecutive years."

The Memorandum of Understanding on establishing a partnership between Ho Chi Minh City People's Committee and the State Government of New South Wales (Australia) was signed in 2019 with the content of cooperation on education and training, resources and energy, start-ups, small and medium-sized businesses, science and technology, and high-tech agriculture. The two sides review the Memorandum of Understanding at least once a year to evaluate implementation progress and to consider future cooperation priorities. Additionally, at the City level, the People's Committee of Ho Chi Minh City is considering signing an extension of the Framework Agreement on Economic Cooperation and the Department of Economic, Trade and Industry with Kansai Region, Japan under the cooperation fields of developing supportive industries, promoting trade, investment and business exchanges, and developing human resources for the industry (the Framework Agreement was signed on September 7, 2016; it would be effective within three years).

When analyzing the figures of outgoing department delegations, sectors, and agencies, the business trips in the field of science, technology and information accounts for over 50%. On the basis of implementing the results of high-level visits, many City departments and sectors have proactive outgoing trips to meet, work, and exchange with partners to implement specific cooperation activities

on many areas in which urban management and science and technology connotations increasingly prevail.

5.3.2.3. Focusing on utilizing the potential of the existing partners in combination with the expansion of relationships with new areas (EU, Middle East, Africa)

There has been a tendency in practice: after EVFTA and EVIPA are signed and about to be ratified, FDI and bilateral trade will increase significantly. Currently, as EU representative offices in Vietnam are pushing the promotion, delegations from EU into the City tend to increase; outgoing delegations to the Middle East are beginning to increase. Africa still has a lot of potential; they sent a delegation to Ho Chi Minh City to explore cooperation opportunities.

The Middle East-Africa is a region rich in natural resources and has a vast potential market. Up to now, Vietnam has established diplomatic relationships with all countries in the Middle East (15/15) and 54 of 55 African countries and is actively working to sign an agreement soon that will establish a diplomatic relationship with Malawi. Vietnam currently has 15 diplomatic missions in the region. 17 African countries have set up embassies and 1 African country has an honorary consulate in Hanoi. There are also 52 Vietnam plurality embassies for Middle East-African countries. The two sides have signed many important cooperative legal documents, and actively exchanged delegations at all levels to enhance mutual understanding and trust. Cooperative mechanisms, such as an intergovernmental committee, joint committee, and political consultancy committee, have been established. Vietnam is not only a potential market for countries in the Middle East and Africa region but also a gateway for Middle East-African countries' goods and services to approach regional markets, especially ASEAN countries.

Over the past 12 years, the two-way trade turnover between Vietnam and the Middle East-Africa region has increased nearly 9 times, from \$2 billion USD in 2005 to over \$17.5 billion USD in 2018 and received over \$7 billion USD of direct investment from this area. Many enterprises from this region have been involved in investment projects in the fields of oil and gas, seaports, industry and other important Vietnamese sectors. Israel helped Vietnam by training hundreds of officials in the fields of science and technology, agriculture, irrigation, and the environment, and sent many teams of doctors and nurses for free examinations and treatment in northern and central provinces in Vietnam.

At the same time, many successful Vietnamese investors have promoted Vietnamese enterprises to increase investment in the region through projects like the oil and gas exploration and exploitation joint venture project of Vietnam National Oil and Gas Group in Algeria and the telecommunication projects of Viettel Group in Mozambique, Cameroon and, most recently, in Tanzania.

Additionally, labor export cooperation with Middle Eastern countries and cooperation of health experts, agriculture, and education experts with African countries are also bright areas in the multifaceted cooperation between Vietnam and Middle East-Africa countries.

Although many important results have been achieved, the concrete cooperation results between our country and these two regions are generally quite modest, not commensurate with the potential and foundation for good political relationships between the two sides.

Similar to HCMC, cooperation deployment has been slow in recent years. The Kuwaiti Consulate General is the only professional consulate mission in the City, and only three countries – Ivory Coast, South Africa, and Sudan – opened consulates and appointed honorary consulates in the City. Johannesburg (South Africa) is the only African city and Al Ahmadi Province (Kuwait) is the only province in the Middle East that have signed a document for establishing cooperative friendship relationships with Ho Chi Minh City. Currently, investors and businesses from the Middle East-African region in the City are limited. There are only a few small investment projects (from UAE, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Israel, Turkey, Iran, Oman, Egypt, Algeria, Nigeria, Seychelles, Mali, South Africa, Mauritius, and Uganda). The trade between Ho Chi Minh City and these two regions is still modest.

The relationship is still not commensurate with the potential of the two sides, mainly due to a lack of information on both sides, lack of understanding of each other's markets, the investment and business environment, language barriers, remote geographical distance, and no direct flights.

However, the grounds for strengthening cooperation between Ho Chi Minh City and localities in this region is firmly present. Over the past years, many delegations, missions and businesses from Middle Eastern and African countries have visited the City. The City has welcomed top leaders from countries in the Middle East-Africa region with a relatively high frequency, showing the potential interest in this region. Specifically, the Minister, Deputy Minister, Directors of Foreign Affairs Ministry, Ambassador, and representatives from UAE, Egypt, Ivory Coast, Botswana, South Africa, Nigeria, Mozambique, Sudan, and Palestine have paid many visits and worked with City Leaders. The cities of Casablanca (Morocco), Istanbul (Turkey), Tabriz (Iran), and Maputo Capital (Mozambique) expressed their desire to establish friendship relationships with Ho Chi Minh City. Many seminars and forums have been held in Ho Chi Minh City – including the Middle East and Africa International Conference: opportunities for trade and promotion of goods export (December 2018) and a workshop on trade cooperation and development prospect in the Middle East-Africa region (June 2019) – which helps strengthen economic cooperation between the City and the Middle East-Africa region.

On the City's side, not many delegations have visited and worked in Middle Eastern and African countries, but the frequency of visits is increasing. During the eight years from 2007 to 2015, the City's leaders made seven visits. In 2018, only two visits were made by the City's top leaders to the region, showing determination and goodwill to promote relationships.

5.3.2.4. The enhanced role of cooperation areas beyond the local level

5.3.2.4.1. With Financial Institutions

Many key projects serving the needs of development, infrastructure upgrading, and traffic improvement in Ho Chi Minh City have attracted funding from the World Bank (WB), the Asian Development Bank (ADB), European Investment Bank (EIB), and German Reconstruction Bank (KfW).

Projects with loans from the World Bank focus on green transport development (bus transit, Smart transportation system), environmental sanitation, urban upgrading (Renovating Tham Luong, Ben Cat Canal, and Nuoc Len Ditch, improving the canal and road along Tan Hoa-Lo Gom canal, City Environment Sanitation - phase 2), and flood risk management. In November 2018, the Chairman of the People's Committee and the Director of the World Bank in Vietnam signed a Memorandum of Understanding on establishing a comprehensive partnership relationship between Ho Chi Minh City and the World Bank for 2018-2020. Accordingly, the World Bank commits to continuing to promote the international knowledge and solutions of the Global Operations Divisions in order to support the City in the development process.

The City has cooperated effectively with the German KfW Reconstruction Bank, especially in important projects on energy, reforestation, urban drainage, and transport, such as Urban Railway No. 2 (Ben Thanh-Tham Luong), and Urban Railway No. 5 (Tan Cang-Bay Hien).

The City People's Committee signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the International Finance Corporation (IFC) in 2017 and jointly confirmed a year-by-year extension of IFC's support for local authority bond issues, international credit rating results from international credit rating agencies, and technical assistance for Smart City construction projects.

5.3.2.4.2. With governmental ministries, sectors and organizations in foreign countries, diplomatic and consulate missions

The City also pays special attention to promoting direct cooperation with governmental ministries, sectors and organizations in foreign countries, diplomatic and consulate missions to attract foreign resources. The fact shows that these agencies can act as a very effective cooperation channel with the City.

The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) has supported the City in the Flood Control and Water Environment Improvement Project. Japan External Trade Promotion Organization (JETRO),

Kansai Regional Department of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI-Kansai), Kansai Regional Economic Federation (KANKEIREN), and the Japan Business Association in HCMC (JBAH) have helped to promote investment in areas where the City is in need including infrastructure, advanced technology, environment, garbage treatment, and flood reduction. Ho Chi Minh City is working closely with ODA agencies from the Japanese government to review and accelerate infrastructure projects like roadways, railways, water environment, sanitation, and strengthening tight tripartite cooperation mechanisms among JICA-ADB-City Government.

The City government signed a cooperation agreement with the Cuban Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment; two cooperation documents with the Dutch Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management, including a Memorandum of Understanding on Integrated Water Management and a Joint Statement on implementing a Sustainable Flooding Public-Private Partnership; a cooperation agreement with the Cuban Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment to share experiences in developing high-tech zones (information about the process of implementing these commitments shall be supplemented); cooperated with the Italian government to implement the program “Improving the Production and Competitive Capacity of Small and Medium Sized Enterprises in Ho Chi Minh City” with a loan of 15 million Euro from Italy; is developing the City’s integrated emergency information receiving and processing system funded by the United States Trade and Development Agency (USTDA); and deployed the construction investment project “Dredging Soai Rap channel–phase 2” with ODA from the Belgian government. Additionally, the European Union (EU) sponsors Future Project in the City and Israel’s Agency for International Development Cooperation (MASHAV) under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Israel has supported and provided scholarships in the field of innovative startups to help the City train and improve the quality of hi-tech human resources, and experience building a startup ecosystem by applying advanced technology.

In 2018, the Embassy of Sweden collaborated with Van Lang University to organize the contest “Innovative as Swedish” with the theme of “Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)” through the United Nations. The contest highlighted sustainable urban and rural development, ensuring a safe living and working environment and rational allocation of population and labor by region.

In 2019, the British Consulate General and the British Regulatory Delivery International signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Industry and Trade and the Food Safety Management Board supporting the City building a pork trading floor. They also signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the City Cadre Academy on technical assistance provision and capacity enhancement for teaching staff of the City Cadre Academy and a Memorandum of

Understanding with the Department of Construction and Department of Transportation within the framework the Global Future City Program.

The Dutch Embassy supported the City's Department of Planning and Architecture to implement the theme "Research on land subsidence in Ho Chi Minh City" in 2018 and implement the Capacity Enhancement Project for the City Steering Center of Urban Flood Control Program in 2015 and 2018.

5.4. Solutions to improve the relationship effectiveness

When I made in-depth interviews, I found that 100% of the respondents have proposed their solutions to improve the quality of international cooperation of Ho Chi Minh City. Thirteen respondents have offered many solutions, with the most proposed ones as follows:

- Ho Chi Minh City leaders should proactively enhance understanding and actively cooperate with localities of partner countries.
- Annual inter-departmental review reports are required on foreign relation activities, and the Department of Foreign Affairs should take charge of reporting all foreign relation activities of the City from which to propose solutions and reorientation for future cooperative foreign relation activities.
- The awareness of officials working in foreign affairs of departments and districts (foreign languages, communication skills ...) should be raised.
- The Department of Foreign Affairs of Ho Chi Minh City needs to monitor closely, do better the role of the focal point, promote and remind other agencies and departments in the process of cooperation between Ho Chi Minh City and partner localities.
- Ho Chi Minh City needs to take advantage of the existing mechanisms in Vietnam's relations with partner countries. For example, in the cooperative relations with localities in Korea, Ho Chi Minh City can take advantage of the available mechanisms such as Vietnam - Korea Intergovernmental Committee, the External Economic Relations mechanism at Deputy Prime Minister Level between South Korea and Vietnam to promote cooperation between Ho Chi Minh City and South Korean localities.
- Ho Chi Minh City needs to take advantage of the community and businesses of partner countries working in the city to strengthen and promote cooperation between Ho Chi Minh City and partner localities.

After analyzing the in-depth interviews source and using more primary and secondary data, I realized that the solutions should be classified and focused on: (i) Mechanisms and policies; and (ii) Practical solutions.

5.4.1. Solutions on mechanisms and policies

5.4.1.1. Building up general policies, objectives and specific action programs on local-level international integration and cooperation relations

Developing policies, general goals and specific action plans on local-level international cooperative friendship relationships will serve the City's development goals in the direction of enhancing the initiative and clearly defining standards when selecting partners.

The 12th National Party Congress document clearly states the objectives and key tasks of foreign affairs in the coming time: "Expanding and bringing in in depth foreign relationships; taking advantage of opportunities, overcoming challenges, effectively [implementing] international integration in new conditions, [and] continuing to improve the position and prestige of the country in the international community."

On the basis of these guidelines, the foreign policy of the Party and the State should proactively identify goals and action plans on foreign affairs, specifically on integration and cooperation relationships. From this, they should make a clear and detailed orientation for the establishment and implementation of cooperation activities with foreign localities, affirming its active and proactive cooperation in international cooperation. Goals and action plans can be developed in two to five years, then reviewed, reevaluated and adjusted to adapt to the reality. Once formulated, these guidelines, objectives and action programs should be thoroughly made clear by all departments and localities to select key partners and areas of cooperation.

The identification and selection of partners will be an important ground for the City to effectively and practically deploy international cooperation activities, particularly with foreign localities. They will need to avoid stereotyping of the same form of cooperation for different localities without exploiting the specific strengths of each partner.

Specifically, based on its needs and development focus in each specific period, the City will be proactive and active in learning, identifying a roadmap, and implementing cooperative activities with each potential and suitable locality, group of countries or region. Summarizing and periodically evaluating the results of the City's local-level international cooperation in all areas of cooperation will be needed. From these summaries, the City will draw lessons learned and identify or adjust directions, supplementing content to adapt to the cooperation for the later period.

5.4.1.2. Proposing the Central Government build up and complete the legal frame

5.4.1.2.1. The Ordinance 33

Currently, there is no legal document that directly governs the process of establishing local level cooperative friendship relationships. This content has only been incorporated in a number of legal documents on international cooperation, such as Ordinance No. 33 on signing and implementing international agreements approved on April 20, 2007 by the National Assembly Standing Committee;

Decree No. 74/2016/ND-CP dated July 1, 2016, on management and use of state budget funding for international treaties and international agreements; and Directive No. 22/CT-TTg on strengthening inspection and urging the implementation of international commitments and agreements. The formulation of official documents in this area is an important basis for localities to orient and take appropriate steps in establishing and implementing international cooperation activities.

The City needs to propose that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs assume the prime responsibility and coordinate with the concerned ministries and sectors in compiling legal documents, which may be in the form of decrees, circulars, and guidelines on local-level international cooperation. In the shorthand, there are two great and urgent affairs, which are:

To amend and supplement Ordinance 33 on the signing and implementation of international agreements in the direction of reducing administrative constraints on localities, the consultation and consent from the Central should only apply to legally binding agreements such as agreements and action programs. For documents aiming at recognizing work contents without specific commitments – like Memorandums of Understanding, Contact Minutes, Meeting Minutes, Working Minutes, etc. – localities should only be asked to seek suggestions and consent from the Central government in terms of guidelines. Localities should then be in charge of self-signing and be responsible for the content of the documents, reporting to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and relevant ministries/sectors after signing (copy of the signed document is attached) to follow up and periodically report on implementation results.

Additionally, Ordinance 33, on the signing and implementation of amended and supplemented International Agreements, may allow decentralized localities to make decisions for themselves, including signing international agreements in non-sensitive areas such as training and retraining to improve the capacity of officials, promoting trade and investment, and tourism without consulting the relevant Central agencies. The decentralization in certain areas will reduce the Central agencies' workload, facilitating in making cooperation plans suitable to their socio-economic situations and shortening unnecessary administrative time to bring international cooperation activities into depth and efficiency.

5.4.1.2.2. Drafting and promulgating legal documents specializing in the adjustment of processes and regulations of local-level international cooperative friendship relationships

Considering the important resources that local-level international cooperative friendship relationships bring to the development of both Ho Chi Minh City and localities nationwide, the proper recognition of the roles in this type of relationship and the existence of a specific written adjustment is necessary. In the immediate future, it is necessary to have unified regulations on the process of establishing relationships, the name of relationships, and a coordination mechanism between the Central and local

governments and among localities themselves in the process of developing relationships. In this process, we can refer to the practice in other countries, especially those with the same political regime. For example, in China, establishing local-level international cooperative friendship relationships requires two stages: (i) signing a MoU to establish friendly cooperative exchange relationships and, then, at least one year later, (ii) signing an agreement to establish a twinning relationship. The signing of these documents must be approved by the Central Friendship Union and Ministry of Foreign Affairs before signing. At least one year after the MoU is signed, the cooperation must be assessed to be effective for the locality to propose an upgrade to the agreement. Only after the Agreement is signed to confirm the intention of the two localities in establishing a twinning relationship can the local-level relationship be determined as a twinning relationship.

The name of this type of relationship should also be adjusted to adapt to international practices. Currently, international practices use the terms “sisterhood,” “sister-city relationship,” and “twinning relationship.” However, this name is not accepted in Vietnam. This warping makes it difficult for our localities to negotiate with foreign partners (as analyzed above). Standardizing the local-level international cooperation process is necessary and should be implemented early in order to create favorable conditions and framework for localities to orient and implement their cooperation activities with localities around the world.

5.4.1.2.3. Supplementing/developing legal documents and norms governing the non-precedent cooperation activities

The City should propose that the Central government research and develop legal documents governing unprecedented cooperation activities such as the establishment of foreign representative offices in the City and the City’s representative offices abroad and an exchange of civil servants working at each other’s public agencies. In fact, this is a reasonable need in implementing cooperative activities at the local level.

Currently, Vietnamese law has no regulations on a foreign locality opening a representative office in Vietnam and vice versa. Therefore, some foreign localities have needed to set up a “representative office” in the City to circumvent the law in order to operate. For example, the representative office of the Rhône-Alpes Regional Business Support Association (ERAI), originally expected to be the Rhône-Alpes Regional Representative Office in Ho Chi Minh City. However, due to the absence of regulations on the establishment of a representative office in Vietnam, the Regional Representative Office needed to operate as a member of the French Business Association in Vietnam (CCIFV) from 2009 to August 2012. Then, according to Decree 100/2011/ND-CP on the establishment of a representative office of foreign trade promotion organizations in Vietnam, the office was renamed ERAI and officially established.

Similar to the Rhône-Alpes Region, Korean localities such as Busan have representative offices in Ho Chi Minh City disguised as trade representative offices (established in 2008). Daegu Representative Office in Ho Chi Minh City acts as a tourism/business representative office (established in 2016) and can only operate within the framework of functions and tasks of the representative office for businesses. It can “perform the function of liaison office, perform activities to promote trade promotion activities from abroad into Vietnam and vice versa; support foreign enterprises to access to and operate in Vietnam market and coordinate with agencies and organizations having functions to carry out trade promotion activities of Vietnam.” The representation of foreign localities in the City is only concurrent and informal. Thus, the main function of these offices is to become secondary functions. The “unnamed position” also limits these offices when working with government agencies on cooperation content and programs between the two localities. The offices are unable to receive any incentives or favorable conditions from the City to complete representative tasks.

In a report evaluating the 10-year effectiveness of cooperation between the Rhône-Alpes Region and Ho Chi Minh City, the Rhône-Alpes Region proposed to “adjust the coordination mechanism of cooperative activities in Ho Chi Minh City,” which emphasized “the presence of liaison offices [in a] locality (in any form) is always considered to be a favorable factor in implementing activities as well as promoting cooperation, if compared with the operations to be deployed without such support.” Therefore, the existence of a formal statute for the representative offices of a foreign locality to be located in Vietnam is a condition in which the locality needs to locate a legal focal point in order to implement cooperation activities. This is important groundwork for the two sides to exchange, build and deploy cooperation projects and programs, thereby bringing cooperation activities between localities into depth and effectiveness.

5.4.1.3. Proposing to strengthen the coordination mechanism

5.4.1.3.1. Mechanism of sharing information between Central and local governments

The City needs propose to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Central ministries/sectors to periodically disseminate the contents of the signed agreements at the Central level, orient international and regional cooperation, update and disseminate medium and long-term orientations on cooperation with each locality/country/group of countries/region, as well as strengths of the key partners that we need to focus on utilizing. These orientations will be the groundwork for localities to refer to, proactively selecting partners or appropriate fields for cooperation promotion.

Furthermore, the exchange mechanism between the Central and local governments is reflected in the Central coordination, based on the strengths and potentials of the localities and international cooperation activities at the local level (in the form of regular review meetings, a shared information

portal, etc.) to adapt to the advantages, potentials and desires of each locality. At the same time, coordination of the areas and the content of cooperation will occur in a relatively even manner among the localities. This will help reduce the situation where localities only focus on cooperating with certain foreign localities, usually capitals or big cities, instead of learning about the localities with similarities to their own development conditions (partly due to lack of information), or the situation in which a foreign locality calls for many Vietnamese localities to support a project. That situation is very popular with the localities in Laos and Cambodia.

The exchange mechanism can be carried out through the consolidation of information from provinces and Vietnamese representative missions in foreign countries into newsletters, periodic reports on local-level international cooperation (progress of cooperation projects and plans for dispatching outgoing delegations/welcoming incoming delegations) or conferences and seminars hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with the participation of Vietnamese and foreign localities. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs plays a leading and coordinating role in organizing the cooperation and information exchange among localities by the following channels: integrating in meetings, periodic briefings between local foreign affairs clusters, the Foreign Affairs Conference (every 2 years), and periodic reporting regimes.

The Vietnam-France decentralized cooperation mechanism is a typical example of success from an effective coordination between the Central Government and localities in local-level cooperation activities. Originating in 1989 with the establishment of a partnership between the region of Ile-de-France and the City of Hanoi, the model of cooperation between localities of the two countries has been constantly strengthened and developed and has become a special feature, contributing to promoting friendly, traditional and multifaceted cooperation between the two countries. Up to now, 38 localities in France and 18 localities in Vietnam have participated in this cooperation model with more than 240 projects implemented. At present, the two countries' Ministries of Foreign Affairs have been identified as the focal points for carrying out local-level cooperation activities. In order to periodically evaluate and review the effectiveness of cooperation between the two countries' localities and set out the direction of cooperation for the following stage, the Franco-Vietnamese Decentralized Cooperation Conference is held every 3-4 years. From these conferences, much experience has been shared, many localities of the two countries have found suitable partners, leading to the establishment of relationships and implement cooperative activities. Through this Conference, the two sides have the same responsibility to shape the exchange activities in the next stage in accordance with development priorities in the overall relationship between the two countries. This is grounds for the parties to have trust in the prospects of implementing local-level cooperation with close attention and promotion from the two governments. This is one of the factors that helps France

become the only country where Vietnam has cooperative relationships at the local level in a specific and increasingly effective framework. The local-level international integration and cooperation relationships between Vietnam and France are considered to be “truly becoming one of the pillars in the Vietnam-France strategic partnership, helping to further tighten the ‘cord’ of exchange, cohesion, sharing, and dialogue between the two countries.”

5.4.1.3.2. Mechanism of sharing information between Vietnam diplomatic missions abroad and host localities

Working closely with a network of more than 80 Vietnamese representative missions abroad to learn about the partners’ localities (the ability to establish relationships, the areas of cooperation priorities, the preferential policies and mechanisms treatment, psychology, and negotiation culture) is a very important and decisive prerequisite for the effectiveness of the establishment and implementation of local-level international integration and cooperation relations.

Overseas Vietnamese representative missions should promote their role as a focal point to provide information and advice to local governments on strengths, priority areas of cooperation, and common policies as well as incentive advantages for foreign localities to make a proper connection. Currently, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has organized a mechanism for fresh heads of representative missions to travel through Vietnam to key localities working on economic development to learn about foreign exchange needs and objectives before they start overseas missions. To enhance the effectiveness of the trips, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs should have a periodic review mechanism that checks the progress of content implementation that the locality can use with new heads of representative missions, thereby assessing the effectiveness of activities. The City also needs to proactively state the “orders” in a “correct” and “adaptive” way for the characteristics of each foreign locality, so that the new heads of the representative missions will come to assume their tasks (currently, Ho Chi Minh City has provided the same list of general information and a list of 210 projects that the City is currently calling for FDI) for all incoming delegations.

In order to build up an effective coordination mechanism for information communication between diplomatic missions and the City in particular and localities in general, it is necessary to establish appropriate communication channels such as email, telephone and periodical reports relating to the countries and localities, thereby ensuring the principle of convenience, efficiency, quickness, safety, and information confidentiality. Accordingly, the representative missions need to designate a focal point in charge of local-level cooperation (possibly an officer in charge of bilateral cooperation) and regularly update this list of focal point contacts after any personnel change in the representative missions.

5.4.1.3.3. Perfecting the City-level coordination mechanism

With the specific characteristics of Ho Chi Minh City, I would like to propose the establishment of an international working division on international cooperation in general and local-level international integration and cooperation relationships in particular, that would include the Department of External Relations and the Office of the City People's Committee along with a few departments and agencies that have cooperation projects and programs within the framework of the City's international commitments. The Department of External Relations of Ho Chi Minh City is both an agency of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the south and an agency authorized by the Ho Chi Minh City People's Committee to deploy, review and urge the implementation of international cooperation activities, including cooperating with foreign localities, representing the People's Committee to direct measures to accelerate implementation, and reporting promptly to the People's Committee on cases that are behind schedule or failing to be implemented. To ensure effectiveness, this Working Division needs a mechanism for periodic meetings and information reporting, a mechanism of self-responsibility for the implementation of assigned tasks.

The 10-year cooperation effectiveness assessment report between the Rhône-Alpes Region and Ho Chi Minh City (conducted by an independent consulting firm hired by the Rhône-Alpes region) clearly states, "The roles of HCMC Department of External Relations in the capital cooperation framework are limited to activities acting as a focal point of contact, information exchange and consultancy (mainly when formulating projects). With such a role, it is difficult for the Department to play a coordinating role. It is impossible for the Department of External Relations to directly manage cooperative activities nor take part in project implementation. In addition, with the functions and duties assigned, it cannot expand operations into other areas of cooperation (for example, university training). Therefore, in order for Ho Chi Minh City Department of External Relations and the Rhône-Alpes International Cooperation Agency to ensure good coordination, it is necessary to expand the scope of the Department to other fields."

As such, it is clear that the existence of a Working Division on local-level international cooperation – including the Department of External Relations, the Office of the People's Committee, and a number of departments with international cooperation activities – is really necessary.

Based on the common database and the evaluation results of related agencies, the Working Division should regularly check, evaluate and send periodic reports to the City's leaders for appropriate adjustment, supplementation and implementation continuation. At the same time, they should propose to have measures to promote local international cooperation.

Besides, it is necessary to build up a shared database for the City on all contents of international cooperation (including fields of cooperation), the number of projects/programs that have been implemented in all agencies, and departments and organizations that have functioning international

cooperation activities and implementation. This data source needs to be updated regularly to satisfy the information needs of relevant agencies as well as partners in the cooperation activity implementation. There should be a specialized full-time staff in each department/sector and a focal point official to timely, fully and accurately update the information for this database.

5.4.1.3.5. Mechanism of exchanging and sharing information between the City and partner localities

In order to exchange and share information between the City and partner localities, there are some forms that can be applied, for example, period and preliminary review of cooperation effectiveness or period provision of updated information about the policy. It is possible to use a web portal to promote a locality the host people. Alternatively, the Central government could have measures to promote local-level international cooperation.

5.4.1.4. Issuing local guidelines on the process of establishing and deploying the local-level international cooperative friendship relationships

With the current trend of deeper and broader integration, the lack of official and unified guidance from the Central government on the process of establishing and implementing relationships and coordination mechanisms in the implementation process is embarrassing to the localities. This situation results in the local establishment of relationships and implementation of cooperative activities in their own way, making it difficult not only for the localities in the process of cooperation but also for the Central agencies in a controlling relationship model of local-level integration and cooperation relationships. For example, there is an absence of regulations on criteria to determine how relationship results differ in statistics of the number of relationships among localities. The absence of a clear regulation on the official name of this type of relationship will make it difficult for localities to negotiate with partner localities. The lack of a coordination mechanism among Vietnamese localities and between localities with the Central government in the process of developing relationships will make information not transparent. Cooperation projects are in danger of overlapping, duplicating, and wasting resources. Therefore, in the absence of promulgated legal documents to officially regulate this content, it is urgent and very necessary for the City to propose to the Central government a plan to formulate a manual to guide localities in this process, not only to standardize the local-level international cooperation process, but also to improve the quality and uniformity of cooperation activities.

Handbooks and manuals on the process of establishing and implementing friendship cooperation should provide specific and consistent information at the national level (from the name and level of relationships, the negotiation process, asking for approval, sample documents, the extent to which the

signing content is publicized, the process of reporting to the Central, and the process of implementing the signing results).

5.4.2. Practical solutions

5.4.2.1. Building a suitable roadmap with relationship-specific features, cooperation model to ensure “mutual benefits”

Giving opinions in my interview, Ambassador Tran Quang Dung, former Consul General of Vietnam in Vancouver, and former Director General of External Relations Department – Ho Chi Minh City said that “...to make relationships become effective, two sides firstly have to put their relationship into mutual benefits which are the core and permanent principle to keep their relationships last long and sustainable” (*in-depth interview source*).

Developing a roadmap of cooperation in accordance with the characteristics of each relationship category (primarily related to political/security purposes or relationships for socio-economic goals) will ensure mutual benefits. The two cooperation directions analyzed below are considered realistic in localities in Vietnam (including Ho Chi Minh City), so they should be adjusted to ensure a “balance” in current cooperation relationships, which will help international cooperation activities in general, and cooperation with foreign localities in particular, be sustained and lasting.

(i) When cooperating with more advanced development localities, we tend to be more interested on “what we get” than “what both sides can get,” often focusing on “what others can help us with,” rather than “how the two sides support each other.” A number of partners have not found a balance in the relationship between the two sides and when there is a policy adjustment, some foreign localities often do not give priority to continue developing relationships with the City.

The collaboration with the Rhône Alpes region is an example. The outstanding and highly appreciated remark of cooperation between Ho Chi Minh City and the Rhône Alpes Region is the establishment of the Center for Urban Forecasting and Research – PADDI (established under Decision No. 08/2006/QĐ-UBND, dated 24, January 2006) with three main functions: international cooperation, consulting, and training and research. The focal point of HCMC to run PADDI is the Department of Planning and Architecture; the focal point of Rhone-Alpes is the Rhone-Alpes Region Planning Department. As mentioned in the achievement section, during its ten years of operation, PADDI has organized many training courses and technical assistance programs and has published many books and documents related to development and planning for urban areas in HCMC. Besides, the leaders of the two localities often paid regular visits to each other to strengthen relationships and make orientations for the following activities.

After more than ten years of cooperation, in September 2008, the Rhône-Alpes Region employed an independent consulting firm to conduct a review of co-operation between the two localities. The report indicated that “a review is required on some issues related to PADDI activities.” Specifically, participation on the Vietnamese side in the project is still limited. In particular, the financial contribution is still modest. Furthermore, the principle of co-management was not as effective as expected (except in the management of organizing courses and discussions). The training courses on specific cases and support to the project owner show a tentative psychology of “free” use of appraisal services of the Rhône-Alpes region. This report was sent to the City with the expectation of a change in awareness of the relevant City authorities. However, in reality, the contents of this assessment have not been properly reviewed by the City’s relevant departments.

Eight years later – nearly twenty years after Ho Chi Minh City and Rhone-Alpes launched bilateral cooperation – the Rhône Alpes Region merged with the Auvergne Region to become the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes Region in 2016 with funding for foreign affairs operations decreased by 50%. The leaders of the region proposed an increase of the City’s financial commitment in cooperation projects (especially within the PADDI framework). After not receiving a firm commitment from the City about this affair, the Region became uninterested in this affair and PADDI stopped its operation in 2017. The expiration of Framework Agreement on cooperation between Ho Chi Minh City and Rhône- Alpes in 2017 was not extended. Ho Chi Minh City, as the beneficiary, neither minded nor actively proposed the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes Region extend this agreement.

Through personal channel exploration, the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes Region is currently carrying out many active cooperation activities with some Korean and Japanese localities which, according to the Region, are more dynamic and effective. As such, it is regrettable that from an effective and appreciated operation, stemming from the right choice of cooperation areas (urban), the relationship could not last due to the lack of interest and lack of initiative from the focal points consulting the leaderships of Ho Chi Minh City.

(ii) When cooperating with localities with lower levels of development, we have a “wrapping” thinking. This is mostly the case with the relationship between Ho Chi Minh City and Lao localities. For example, Ho Chi Minh City has been sponsoring Lao localities in many projects with funding often being huge and proposed by the Lao side (such projects include installing art lighting systems for President Cay-som Phom-vi-han Monument in Savannakhét Province, supporting Champasak Province in planning Paksong town subdivision, constructing the headquarters of Hua Phan Province, constructing the Library of Xieng Khouang Province, and upgrading and repairing Attapeu Hospital). Although helping Laos is a political mission to serve long-term and sustainable national interests, the majority of such support is not binding. In fact, other countries, when giving ODA, require a turnkey,

employment of contractors or laborers from the sponsoring countries. However, with supporting projects for Laos, Vietnam gives cash and when the main work item is completed, they continue to ask the government to support surrounding works not even related to the main project. Moreover, the effectiveness of promoting cooperation between the two localities through a number of constructions is negligible. For example, the Champasak Cultural House built under the support of the City is quite far from the residential area, so its effectiveness is not high.

Therefore, for this case, the formulation of the criteria on the value of infrastructure in support of Laos relevant to the localities of Vietnam will help Vietnamese localities partly limit Laos' "excessive" requests compared to the actual situation. For the works that have been completed, Vietnam needs to have a monitoring mechanism and suggest the localities maintain a schedule, avoiding the rapid degradation of the works, causing waste to the aid.

As such, determining the appropriate cooperation roadmap, a reasonable financial mechanism, criteria, implementation norms, and binding conditions for local-level cooperation activities in "mutual-benefits spirit" is an important key for the City in general, as well as localities in the country, to be more proactive in implementing cooperation with foreign localities, thereby bringing local-level international cooperation activities into depth and efficiency.

5.4.2.2. Enhancing the effectiveness of trade-investment-tourism promotion activities at partner localities

The survey results show that 83% of people surveyed positively evaluated the professionalism partner localities in preparing and organizing trade-investment-tourism promotion activities in Ho Chi Minh City whereas only 33% of them positively evaluated same activities of Ho Chi Minh City in partner localities (*survey and in-depth interview source*). This put some questions and ask for some solutions from relevant agencies of Ho Chi Minh City to adjust, change the way to trade-investment-tourism promotion activities at partner localities.

Effectively and positively deployed economic cooperation activities are an important factor to promote and support the implementation of other cooperation activities such as culture and tourism. The force of businesses is an inevitable source in the process of local-level international cooperation. Therefore, in this solution, there should be a plan to update information on the international, regional and national situation and retrain foreign affair knowledge for City businesses, helping businesses build appropriate and effective business plans, thereby contributing to further promoting international cooperation activities.

I think it is necessary to further enhance cultural exchange activities, especially "Ho Chi Minh City Days" events in other foreign countries. These days have been successfully implemented in recent years and contributed to raising positions and promoting a strong image of the City in particular and

Vietnam in general to the localities, further tightening the City's friendly relations with other countries and creating favorable conditions for attracting investment, tourism and cooperation in other fields.

5.4.2.3. Diversifying the sources for implementing cooperation

The survey results show that 100% of specialists surveyed agreed that the City should find more additional and supplemental sources to promote international cooperation and commitments (*survey and in-depth interview source*).

The City should utilize the existent mechanism of Vietnam's diplomacy like political consultation, Intergovernmental Boards, etc. which are for promoting cooperation at localities – level whereas taking the advantage of business communities to promote the City international cooperation.

In the in-depth interview, Ms. Tran Thi Hieu Hanh did take San Francisco as an example that after signing the MOU with Ho Chi Minh City, San Francisco governance authorized HCMC-San Francisco cooperation Board, a non-government agency, to implement the items of cooperation signed. The Board which gathered all enthusiastic experts and worked for free of salary, suggested the framework and content for two sides' cooperation as well as mobilizing and socializing sources for implementing (*in-depth interview source*).

In the relationship with the Rhône-Alpes region, as another example, the effects of this combination is extremely clear and are being manifested in various areas of cooperation. The HCMC Department of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs, Rhône-Alpes region, and Triangle Generation Humanitaire (TGH) started a cooperation to build the Restaurant professional training school project for street children in September 1998 (now the school is a unit under the Department of Labor, War Invalids and Social Affairs, called City Restaurant Skill School). In terms of health, Ho Chi Minh City and the Rhône-Alpes region have collaborated on two projects: improving the emergency aid capacity of Trung Vuong Hospital (via HUMACOOP) and building a septic center in the City's Odonto-Stomatology Hospital (via the Association of Dental Assistance for Vietnam [ADV]). In the agricultural sector, the project "supporting the development of sustainable livestock in the outskirts of Ho Chi Minh City" by Borderless Agriculture and Veterinary Organization (VSF-CICDA) in collaboration with HCMC Department of Agriculture and Rural Development has been implemented since March 2012 with many solutions to improve reality and support sustainable livestock development in the context of urbanization and climate change adaptation in the outskirts of Ho Chi Minh City. At the same time, people are organizing dairy farmer training in building biogas tanks and improving local veterinary service quality in five project communes in Cu Chi district, Ho Chi Minh City (Tan Thanh Dong, Tan Thanh Tay, An Phu, An Nhon Tay, Phu My Hung).

In the context of limited resources of the City, with the encouragement and facilitation of the City's leaders, the tendency of businesses, hospitals, schools, profit and non-profit agencies and associations participating in the cooperation programs will be increasingly intensive, supplementing resources so that subnational/substate relations of the City have strong momentum, enabling the non-state sector to play its role, and also benefiting the subnational/substate relations of the City.

To promote this trend, the City should take measures to encourage socio-political organizations, occupational social organizations, mass organizations and enterprises with strong financial potential to participate in the implementation of projects in the framework of subnational/substate relations of the City, at first, the projects that these organizations, unions and businesses are beneficiaries. This participation helps the City save resources to allocate evenly to the subnational/substate relations, while helping organizations, unions, and businesses participate more deeply and actively in subnational/substate relations of the City, making the achievements of the relation spillover to non-state sectors, ensuring the dynamism and spillover effects of relations. This is consistent with the practice of the recent participation of organizations, unions, and businesses of the City in cooperative projects, both suitable for the increasingly intensive and extensive participation tendency and these factors in the implementation of subnational/substate relation of Ho Chi Minh City in the next five years.

Chapter 6. Conclusions

6.1. Summary and overview

The main outcomes of my research is to do research on the current situation of Ho Chi Minh City's subnational friendly international cooperative relations by discovering its process from 1975 to clarify overview of the relations, the process of formation and development, affecting factors; achievements and shortcomings of the subnational friendly international cooperative relations of the city, then to forecast the development trend of Ho Chi Minh City's subnational friendly international cooperative relations and propose solutions to improve Ho Chi Minh City's subnational friendly international cooperative relations.

When collecting and analyzing data to answer the three research questions, I found that choosing Neo-functionalism as main theory of theoretical framework (in combination with Historical Institutionalism and Rational Choice theory) was suitable because Neo-functionalism assumes that integration takes place in low politics. In case of Ho Chi Minh City, the demand of economic, trade, tourism and others factors play significant role in boosting the City process of strong international cooperative relations.

In addition, Ho Chi Minh City, as subnational/substate government, and as other actor involved in international relations, not only in scale of nation. When having its certain activeness in subnational friendly international cooperative process, Ho Chi Minh city acted as an integration model for subnational/substate governments. It could learn from the way Vietnam participated in international political life, from which Ho Chi Minh city could take advantage of this model, or resources from their countries when participating in international activities. My research results also showed the interaction between Vietnam and Ho Chi Minh city in the integration process.

I also found that the process of the city's subnational friendly international cooperative relations arised some main points as follows:

Starting as a fairly conservative locality in international relations after the liberation period, being limited to relations in the socialist bloc, so far the city has established friendly international cooperative relations with 53 localities on all continents, with cooperation projects spanning across a variety of fields. Through each stage, the speed of expanding subnational/substate friendly international cooperative relations of the City is increasingly fast. The city is becoming more proactive in identifying partners and areas of cooperation on the basis of its development priorities. The content of the documents signed in the framework of relations is increasingly substantive. Commitments are effectively implemented in reality, contributing to the implementation of national foreign policy; promoting the image and enhancing the international position of the City; promoting

trade turnover, capital inflows and foreign tourists to the City; bringing resources of capital, technology, experience, and helping to improve the quality of human resources of City officials. The results of the relationship also spill over to the non-state sector with the increasing participation of institutes, schools, businesses, social, and professional organizations in the process of implementing and benefiting from commitment within the framework of the relationship.

However, as a young locality in international cooperation activities, with limited external capacity of civil servants, also bound by both mechanical and legal constraints, the city inevitably restricts its implementation of the subnational/substate friendly international cooperative relations. The initiative of the City is generally not high, both when selecting partners and when implementing relations, so the effectiveness of the relationship network has not been maximized. Geographic diversity in the partner local system is not guaranteed, and the majority of localities where the city has a cooperative relationship were concentrated in Asia, especially in Northeast Asia, and have not focused on exploitation of good cooperation potential with developed partners in European and American countries. Collaborative projects are large in number but the quality of implementation and effectiveness is not uniform, some of them are still in the form of political gifts or are ‘clinically dead’. These limitations, if not frankly recognized and treated with a timely remedy, will be a significant deterrent to the City’s effort to fully exploit the important resources that this relationship group has brought about.

In the next five years, subnational/substate friendly international cooperative relations will still be an important external channel that helps the City mobilize external resources for socio-economic development. The degree of initiative from the two sides in the relationship will be gradually balanced as the city’s needs and priority development areas are increasingly clearly defined. The cooperation connotations in the framework of relations will increasingly approach the world, gradually getting into the trajectory of urgent needs that global megacities are focusing on solving, such as infrastructure, climate change, environmental pollution, renewable energy, sustainable development, etc. In addition, based on the development goals, the city’s demand for resources and the evolution of relations in recent years, it is reasonable to assume that the potential of existing partner localities will be better exploited by the City, while the subnational/substate friendly international cooperative relations of Ho Chi Minh City will be expanded to new areas, and the most promising are the Middle East and Africa. Besides, it is undeniable that in addition to the subnational/substate friendly international cooperative relation, other channels of cooperation such as cooperation with financial institutions, direct cooperation with foreign governments through the Foreign Mission and the Consulate Delegation, intensive cooperation in each field with international subnations/substates

(instead of signing an agreement to establish a comprehensive relationship framework) will increasingly dominate the international cooperation of the City.

In this context, in order to promote the aforementioned trends and improve the efficiency of the subnational/substate friendly international cooperative relations in attracting resources for development, the City needs to seriously consider the limitations in relations and causes of restrictions to conduct timely and synchronous remedies.

6.2. Evaluation of the research

In comparison to my purpose of research as research questions, after using data and analyzing it, I found that in Vietnam, decision makers or politicians almost focus on mechanism to run their organizations. However, provided that mechanism plays an important role, the effectiveness of running an organization still needs more factors, especially the activeness of decision makers and politicians to have an outlook of the situation and try to find the solutions for those of weaknesses. It is absolutely true in the case of sub-national cooperation relation activities. I also found that the capacity of human resources in this field also played a significant role in pushing the sub-national IFC of Ho Chi Minh city. Thus, my research is to make how bad and good the city IFC was and what are the solutions for that. Then the research is essential for the leaders of the city because of my suggestions in the results as:

In the immediate future, the City should immediately implement feasible practical solutions in the short and medium term. Firstly, focus on reviewing to understand the core goals of partner subnations/states when establishing relations with the City, thereby implementing a mutually beneficial cooperation model to maintain long-term trust and enthusiastic cooperation from the partners. Secondly, the effectiveness of trade, investment and tourism promotion activities organized in partner localities should be strengthened through careful consultation with the subnational/substate partners on their tastes, culture and customs; Applying support and preferential channels, which are reserved by the host country for partner subnations/states. Thirdly, it is necessary to diversify resources to implement cooperation through consultation with partner localities in this field and encouraging measures to combine state resources and non-state resources (from businesses, institutions, and political-social organizations, social-occupational organizations, the unions, associations) in the deployment and enjoyment of the relation achievements.

In the long term, the City needs to implement policies and mechanisms to improve the effectiveness and sustainability of relations. The first important solution that the City needs to carry out is to review and group the relations to determine the priority order, objectives and roadmap for implementing each relationship group; from there, avoiding the application of stereotypes of cooperation with different localities, failing to exploit the unique strengths of each partner. Secondly, the City should consider

establishing an interdisciplinary Task Force on international cooperation in general, a subnational/substate friendly international cooperative relation in particular, to periodically review and urge the implementation of international commitments, timely reporting and recommending remedial measures to accelerate progress and quality of commitment implementation. The city also needs to propose to the Central Government to improve the mechanisms for sharing external information between the Central Government and localities and between Vietnamese missions abroad and localities. Thirdly, the City needs to have mechanisms and policies to improve the capacity of the foreign affairs agency; improve the external capacity and awareness of City officials and citizens about the role and resources that subnational/substate friendly international cooperative relation brings. This solution will help increase the activeness of professional departments, thereby contributing to increasing the initiative of the City in relations. Fourth, the City should propose to the Central Government to build and complete the legal framework to remove the legal problems currently 'tied' to the City when establishing and implementing relations.

The above-mentioned solutions should be conducted synchronously and drastically by the City so that it can create an important push to improve the efficiency of the City's subnational/substate friendly international cooperative relation in the coming five years, helping relations promote all roles as an important channel to attract external resources for the development of the City.

Last but not least, as analyzed in chapter of Literature review, when there are few research on this topic in Vietnam and limitation of data for my research, I do hope that this nearly first research will be not only applied to enhance the integration process of Ho Chi Minh city, but is also used as a reference or source of data for related researches in the future, as a reference for central government's diplomacy in general and other localities throughout Vietnam in particular.

However, the limitations of my research is the less data sources because of this field of sub-national IFC, especially the international sources in accordance with/similar to the political system of Vietnam. Additionally, because of time limitation and my current job, I could not set up field trips to some foreign partner localities of Ho Chi Minh city to see how and what those locality implement the sub-national IFC in reality.

6.3. Suggestions for future research

From my research, I believed that it should be the first-hand study in related areas in Vietnam. Some results of my research can be the reference source for future research in terms of Diplomacy for economic interests, Diplomacy for cultural interests and so on.

In Vietnam, its political system also includes regional connection mechanism which gathers many provinces/localities within a region and with a certain development strategy for the region. In this

research, I just took Ho Chi Minh city as only sub-national body for my study while not observing it in the scale of its region. Thus, my research is also to lay the foundation for IFC at regional scale.

References

1. Document in Vietnamese

Central Party Propaganda Department (2018). Learning materials for documents of the 8th Plenum of the Party Central Committee. Hanoi: National Political Publishing House.

Communist Party of Vietnam. (1977). Document of the 4th National Congress. Hanoi: Truth Publishing House.

Communist Party of Vietnam. (1991). Documents of the Seventh National Congress. Hanoi: Truth Publishing House.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2002). Vietnam Diplomacy 1945 - 2000. Hanoi: National Political Publishing House.

Pao Min Chang. (1982). China - Vietnamese dispute and Chinese minority issue, Translation, recorded at Military Library, Hanoi.

Le Minh Quan (chief editor), Regarding some of the major political trends in the world today, National Political Publishing House 2014.

Pham Binh Minh (chief editor), World face up to 2020 - Diplomatic Academy, National Political Publishing House 2012: World face, impact factors and development trends (Pham Binh Minh).

Van Sen (chief editor). (2013). The Southern region of Vietnam during the period of international integration. Journal of Science and Technology Development, vol. 16, issue X1.

Vo Van Sen & Duong Thanh Thong. (2015). Saigon-Ho Chi Minh City, the driving force in socio-economic development. Journal of Science and Technology Development, No. 18.

Nguyen Co Thach. (1990). Changes in our world and our mindset. Journal of International Relations.

Tran Nam Tien (Chief editor). (2015). Diplomatic activities of Ho Chi Minh City from 1975 to 2015. Ho Chi Minh City, Culture - Arts Publishing House.

2. Documents in English

Adam Grydehøj. (2014). Goals, Capabilities, and Instruments of Paradiplomacy by Subnational Jurisdictions. In Grydehøj et al. (eds.), Local Actions in a Global Context: Paradiplomacy by Subnational Jurisdictions. Brussels: Centre Maurits Coppieters.

Aldecoa F. và M.Keating. (1999). Paradiplomacy in action: The foreign relations of subnational governments. London: Frank Cass Publishers.

Bland, G. (2007). Decentralization, local governance, and conflict mitigation in Latin America. In ed. Derick W. Brinkerhoff. *Governance in post-conflict societies, rebuilding fragile states*. London: Routledge.

Burley, A., & Mattli, W. (1993). *Europe Before the Court: A Political Theory of Legal Integration*. International Organization, vol 47

Bush, K. (2003). *Building capacity for peace and unity: The role of local government in peace-building*. Ottawa: Publication of Federation of Canadian Municipalities

Caporaso, J. (1998). Regional integration theory: understanding our past and anticipating our future. *Journal of European Public Policy*, Vol. 5(1).

Caporaso, J. A. (1970). Encapsulated Integrative Patterns vs. Spillover: The Cases of Agricultural and Transport Integration in the European Economic Community. *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol.14(4).

Cima, R. J. (2002). Vietnam: Historical background. Trong V. Largo (Ed.), *Vietnam: Current issues and historical background*. New York: Nova Science Publishers.

Conti, S., & Giaccaria, P. (2013). *Local Development and Competitiveness*. Springer Science & Business Media.

Curtis, S. (2014). *The Power of Cities in International Relations*. Routledge.

"Do we have a foreign policy?". *Daily Mirror*. (2017, Oct 02).

Filho, Y., and A. Gallo. (2013). Paradiplomacy and the diffusion of regional integration: An analysis of the Mercocidades Network. *Perspectives: Review of International Affairs*, vol 2.

Fons van Overbeek. (2007). *City Diplomacy: The Roles and Challenges of the peace building equivalent of decentralized cooperation*. Netherlands: Universiteit Utrecht.

Friedman, D., & Hechter, M. (1988). The Contribution of Rational Choice Theory to Macrosociological Research. *Sociological Theory*, vol 6(2).

Gaur, S. (2003). Framework agreement on comprehensive economic co-operation between india and ASEAN: First step towards economic integration. *ASEAN Economic Bulletin*.

Goldfarb, D. (2005). U.S. bilateral free trade accords: Why Canada should be cautious about going the same route. *Commentary - C.D.Howe Institute*.

Haas, Ernst B. (1964). *Beyond the Nation-state: Functionalism and International Organization*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Haas, Ernst B. (1970). *The Study of Regional Integration: Reflections on the Joy and Anguish of Pretheorizing*. International Organization, vol 24.

Haas, Ernst B. (2004). *The uniting of Europe: political, social, and economical forces 1950-1957*. France: University of Notre Dame Press.

Hadi, S. (2005). Enhancing local governance through decentralization policy in managing conflict-affected regions in Eastern Indonesia. *Regional Development Dialogue*, vol 26.

Haftack, P. (2003). An introduction to decentralized cooperation: Definitions, origins and conceptual mapping. *Public Administration and Development*, vol 23.

Hajjar, D., Richardson, J., & Coleman, K. (2015). Role for diplomacy in advancing global science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) policies in the twenty-first century. *Seton Hall Journal of Diplomacy and International Relations*.

Harding, A., & Sidel, M. (2015). *Central-Local Relations in Asian Constitutional Systems*. Bloomsbury Publishing.

Heinelt, H., and S. Niederhafner. (2008). Cities and organised interest intermediation in the EU multi-level governance. *European Urban and Regional Studies*, vol 12.

John Ravenhill. (1999). Federal-States Relations in Australian External Affairs. In F. Aldecoa and M. Keating (eds.), *Paradiplomacy in Action. The Foreign Relations of Subnational Governments*. London: Frank Cass.

Koschut, S., & Oelsner, A. (B.t.v). (2014). *Friendship and International Relations*. Palgrave Macmillan UK. <https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137396341>.

Kütting, G. (2013). *Environment, Society and International Relations: Towards More Effective International Agreements*. Routledge.

Kwon, S. (2019). *The role of government in economic growth and development: the Cases of Korea and Vietnam*. New York: Nova Science Publishers.

André Lecours. (2002). *Paradiplomacy: Reflections on the Foreign Policy and International Relations of region*. *International Negotiation*, Vol 7.

Lecours, A. (2003). *Paradiplomacy: Reflections on the foreign policy and international relations of regions*. *International Negotiation*, vol 7.

André Lecours. (2008). *Political issues of paradiplomacy: Lessons from the developed world*. Netherlands: Institute of International Relations 'Clingendael'.

Lee, J. S. (2016). *Strategies to Achieve a Binding International Agreement on Regulating Cartels: Overcoming Doha Standstill*. Springer Singapore. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-2756-7>.

Lim, Y. J. (2017). Conceptual models of media diplomacy: For the resolution of international communication conflict. *International Journal of Communication Research*.

Lucinescu, A., PhD. (2017). *Defence diplomacy is not always diplomacy: an inquiry into a partly misleading correlation*. Strategic Impact.

Manda, C.C. and Nicolescu, E.C. (2017). Legal and Practical Aspects of the Associations between the City of Bucharest and the Large Collectivities Territorial -Actuality and Perspective. Theoretical and Applied Economics, Vol. XXI.

Matsushita, M. (2004). Governance of international trade under world trade organization agreements-relationships between world trade organization agreements and other trade agreements. Journal of World Trade.

Mirela MINCĂ. (2015). Types of international cooperation at the subnational/substate Bucharest city hall. Theoretical and Applied Economics, Vol XXII.

Phan, M. N. (2008). Sources of Vietnam's economic growth. Progress in Development Studies, 8(3).

Philippe, Schmitter. (2003). Neo-neofunctionalism, European Integration Theory. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Pluijm, R., and J. Melissen. (2007). City diplomacy: The expanding role of cities in international politics. Netherlands: Institute of International Relations 'Clingendael'.

Ruffini, P. (2016). International trade and foreign affairs - some reflections on economic diplomacy. Journal of International Logistics and Trade.

Schneider-Sliwa, R. (2006). Cities in Transition: Globalization, Political Change and Urban Development. Springer Science & Business Media.

Seabrooke, L. (2011). Economists and diplomacy. International Journal.

Sevin, H. E. (2014). Making new friends? relational public diplomacy as a foreign policy instrument (Order No. 3631071). Available from ProQuest Central. (1564442089.

Stéphane Paquin. (2003). Paradiplomatie identitaire en Catalogne. Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval.

United nations foundation; united nations association of the usa; global leadership dinner honors those who work with the united nations. (2014, Oct 23). Politics & Government Business.

Turner, M. (B.t.v). (1999). Central-Local Relations in Asia-Pacific: Convergence or Divergence? Palgrave Macmillan UK. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-27711-7>.

Uludag, M. B., Karagul, S., & Baba, G. (2013). Turkey's role in energy diplomacy from competition to cooperation: Theoretical and factual projections. International Journal of Energy Economics and Policy, 3, 102-n/a.

Vassort-Rousset, B. (B.t.v). (2014). Building Sustainable Couples in International Relations: A Strategy Towards Peaceful Cooperation. Palgrave Macmillan UK. <https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137273543>.

Vietnam: Vietnam, UN mark 40 years of cooperation. (2017, Sep 22). Asia News Monitor.

3. Online documents/website

Barboza, D. (2010, August 15). China Passes Japan as Second-Largest Economy. The New York Times. Please access:(<https://www.nytimes.com/2010/08/16/business/global/16yuan.html>).

Foreign policies:(<http://www.mofa.gov.vn/vi/csdoingoai/ns110901104725/view>) Functions and duties Ho Chi Minh City Department of Foreign Affairs:http://www.mofahcm.gov.vn/vi/gioithieu_snv/nr041216100909).

Foreign policy of the XI Congress and important developments in the external thinking of our Party. (<http://www.mofa.gov.vn/vi/csdoingoai/nr070523093001/ns110520170239/view>).

HCM CityWeb: Foreign affairs of Ho Chi Minh City enhances the quality of international integration:

(<http://www.hochiminhcity.gov.vn/thongtinthanhpho/tintuc/Lists/Posts/Post.aspx?List=5eb16142%2Df62d%2D4d6e%2Dda0c3%2D94b5fbf93d65&ID=59396&Web=47b63c10%2D8ed8%2D45922D97d8%2D1f436710fa9b>).

<http://www.mofa.gov.vn/en/nr040807104143/nr040807105001/ns160918120148>).

<http://www.mofahcm.gov.vn/vi/mofa/nr040807104143/nr111027144142/ns120121044904>.

Resolution of the 6th City Party Congress (1996-2000): (<https://www.hcmcpv.org.vn/tu-lieu/van-kien-dai-hoi-dai-bieu-dang-bo-tphcm-lan-thu-vi/bao-cao-chinh-tri-cua-ban-chap-hanh-dang-bo-thanh-pho-khoa-v-tai-dai-hoi-dai-bieu-dang-bo-thanh-pho-1077245548>).

Resolution of the 7th City Party Congress (2000-2005): (<https://www.hcmcpv.org.vn/tu-lieu/van-kien-dai-hoi-dai-bieu-dang-bo-tphcm-lan-thu-vii/bao-cao-chinh-tri-cua-ban-chap-hanh-dang-bo-thanh-pho-khoa-vi-tai-dai-hoi-dai-bieu-dang-bo-thanh-pho-1076904882>).

Resolution of the 8th City Party Congress (2005-2010): (<https://www.hcmcpv.org.vn/tu-lieu/van-kien-dai-hoi-dai-bieu-dang-bo-tphcm-lan-thu-viii/bao-cao-chinh-tri-1139305193>).

Resolution of the 9th City Party Congress (2010-2015): (<https://www.hcmcpv.org.vn/tu-lieu/van-kien-dai-hoi-dai-bieu-dang-bo-tphcm-lan-thu-ix/ngghi-quyet-dai-hoi-dai-bieu-dang-bo-thanh-pho-ho-chi-minh-lan-thu-ix-nhiem-ky-2010-2015-1291325652>).

Resolution of the 10th City Party Congress (2015-2020): (<https://www.hcmcpv.org.vn/tu-lieu/van-kien-dai-hoi-dai-bieu-dang-bo-tphcm-lan-thu-x/ngghi-quyet-dai-hoi-dai-bieu-dang-bo-thanh-pho-ho-chi-minh-lan-thu-x-nhiem-ky-2015-2020-1450779786>).

Speed B., 2014: What does this town have to do to become a “world city”, (<https://www.citymetric.com/what-does-town-have-do-become-world-city>).

Summary of Vietnam’s FTA as of the July 2019: (<http://www.trungtamwto.vn/thong-ke/12065-tong-hop-cac-fta-cua-viet-nam-tinh-den-thang-112018>).

Vietnam Communist Party Committee - Ho Chi Minh City. (1980). Document of the Second Congress of Ho Chi Minh City Communist Party members - Ho Chi Minh City. (<https://www.hcmcpv.org.vn/tu-lieu/van-kien-dai-hoi-dai-bieu-dang-bo-tphcm-lan-thu-ii/nghi-quyet-dai-hoi-dai-bieu-lan-thu-ii-cua-dang-bo-dang-cong-san-viet-nam-thanh-pho-ho-chi-minh-tu-1079060298>).

Vietnam Communist Party Committee - Ho Chi Minh City. (1983) Document of the 3rd Congress of Vietnamese Communist Party members - Ho Chi Minh City. Ho Chi Minh City. (<https://www.hcmcpv.org.vn/tu-lieu/van-kien-dai-hoi-dai-bieu-dang-bo-thanh-pho-ho-chi-minh-lan-thu-iii/bao-cao-tinh-hinh-va-nhiem-vu-1078306256>).

Vietnam Communist Party Committee - Ho Chi Minh City (1986) Document of the Fourth Party Congress of Vietnam Communist Party Committee - Ho Chi Minh City. Ho Chi Minh City. (<https://www.hcmcpv.org.vn/tu-lieu/van-kien-dai-hoi-dai-bieu-dang-bo-thanh-pho-ho-chi-minh-lan-thu-iv/bao-cao-tinh-hinh-va-nhiem-vu-tai-dai-hoi-lan-thu-iv-cua-dang-bo-tphcm-1078992497>).

Vietnam Communist Party Committee - Ho Chi Minh City (1991) Document of the 5th Congress of Ho Chi Minh City Communist Party Committee - Ho Chi Minh City. Ho Chi Minh City. (<https://www.hcmcpv.org.vn/tu-lieu/van-kien-dai-hoi-dai-bieu-dang-bo-thanh-pho-ho-chi-minh-lan-thu-v/bao-cao-chinh-tri-cua-ban-chap-hanh-dang-bo-dang-cong-san-viet-nam-thanh-pho-ho-chi-minh-khoa-iv-p-1078279619>).

Vietnam Communist Party Committee - Ho Chi Minh City (1996) Document of the 6th Congress of Vietnam Communist Party Committee - Ho Chi Minh City. Ho Chi Minh City. (<https://www.hcmcpv.org.vn/tu-lieu/van-kien-dai-hoi-dai-bieu-dang-bo-thanh-pho-ho-chi-minh-lan-thu-vi/bao-cao-chinh-tri-cua-ban-chap-hanh-dang-bo-thanh-pho-khoa-v-tai-dai-hoi-dai-bieu-dang-bo-thanh-pho-1077245548>).

Vietnam Communist Party Committee - Ho Chi Minh City (2000) Document of the 7th Congress of the Vietnam Communist Party Committee - Ho Chi Minh City. Ho Chi Minh City.

Vietnam Communist Party Committee - Ho Chi Minh City (2005) Document of the Eighth Congress of the Vietnam Communist Party Committee - Ho Chi Minh City. Ho Chi Minh City. (<https://www.hcmcpv.org.vn/tu-lieu/van-kien-dai-hoi-dai-bieu-dang-bo-tphcm-lan-thu-viii/bao-cao-chinh-tri-1139305193>).

Vietnam Communist Party Committee - Ho Chi Minh City (2010) Document of the 9th National Congress of Ho Chi Minh City Communist Party Committee of Ho Chi Minh City. Ho Chi Minh City. (<https://www.hcmcpv.org.vn/tu-lieu/van-kien-dai-hoi-dai-bieu-dang-bo-tphcm-lan-thu-ix/tiep-tuc-nang-cao-nang-luc-lanh-dao-suc-chien-dau-toan-dang-bo-phat-huy-dan-chu-tang-cuong-doan-k-1291325866>).

Vietnam Communist Party Committee - Ho Chi Minh City (2015) Document of the 10th National Congress of Ho Chi Minh City Communist Party Committee of Ho Chi Minh City. Ho Chi Minh City. (<https://www.hcmcpv.org.vn/van-ban-van-kien/-van-kien-dai-hoi-dai-bieu-dang-bo-tphcm-lan-thu-x-1462530928>).

Vietnam Communist Party (2006). Document of the 10th National Congress of Communist Party of Vietnam. Hanoi. (<http://www.chinhphu.vn/portal/page/portal/chinhphu/NuocCHXHCNVietNam/ThongTinTongHop/noidungvankiendaihoi dang?categoryId=10000715&articleId=10038386>).

Vietnam Communist Party. (2011). Document of the 11th National Congress of Communist Party of Vietnam. Hanoi. <http://dai-hoi-dang/lan-thu-xi/bao-cao-chinh-tri-cua-ban-chap-hanh-trung-uong-dang-khoa-x-tai-dai-hoi-dai-bieu-toan-quoc-lan-thu-xi-cua-dang-1526>).

5 Projects of building Ho Chi Minh City into a smart city (<http://www.medinet.hochiminhcity.gov.vn/chuyen-muc/5-du-an-xay-dung-thanh-pho-ho-chi-minh-thanh-do-thi-thong-minh-c1780-22084.aspx>).

XII Congress and new points on foreign policy (<http://www.mofa.gov.vn/vi/nr140319210702/ns160904093015/view>) Vietnam Communist Party Committee - Ho Chi Minh City. (1977). Document of the First Party Congress of Ho Chi Minh City Communist Party Committee. (<https://www.hcmcpv.org.vn/tu-lieu/van-kien-dai-hoi-dai-bieu-dang-bo-tphcm-lan-thu-ii/ngghi-quyet-dai-hoi-dai-bieu-lan-thu-i-cua-dang-bo-dang-cong-san-viet-nam-thanh-pho-ho-chi-minh-tu-1079060298>).

Appendix

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW (FOR EXPERTS OUTSIDE VIETNAM)

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am undertaking a city-level research themed '*Current situation and solutions to improve the effectiveness of the subnational friendly international cooperation relation of Hồ Chí Minh City*' with a view to enhancing the effectiveness of the relationship between HCMC and her sister cities.

To that end, I would like to ask you to kindly answer the following questions, which involve the evaluation of the sisterhood between Ho Chi Minh City and your locality, both achievements and limitations.

You can skip any questions that you are not comfortable with. However, I do hope to get your insightful inputs/comments on every question since these inputs/comments are crucial to the quality of my research.

I highly appreciate your kind attention to this request.

Questions:

1. Your general comments on the sisterhood between your locality/localities and Ho Chi Minh City (achievements, limitations, suggestions for future cooperation, ect.)
2. What is/are the highlight(s) of the sisterhood between Ho Chi Minh City and your locality/localities? What are the reasons of such highlight(s)?
3. What should be done to further enhance the effectiveness, quality and scope of cooperation between our two localities?
4. Is there any best practice that you would like to share with Ho Chi Minh City in the area of sister-city relationship?

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW
(FOR DOMESTIC EXPERTS)

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am implementing the city-level scientific research project entitled '*Current situation and solutions to improve the effectiveness of the subnational friendly international cooperation relation of Hồ Chí Minh City*' with a view to enhancing the effectiveness of the relationship between HCMC and her sister cities.

To that end, I would like to ask you to kindly answer the following questions, which involve the process of formation and development, the factors affecting the achievements and limitations; predict the trends, propose solutions to improve relation productivity, contribute actively to building the most effective policies.

You can skip any questions that you are not comfortable with. However, I do hope to get your insightful inputs/comments on every question since these inputs/comments are crucial to the quality of my research. We guarantee that all the information we collect is used for scientific purposes, and we do not disclose your personal information.

Thank you very much for your support.

Questions:

1. Could you please make an overview comment on the achievements and limitations in the process of establishing and implementing substate/subnational international friendly cooperative relations of Ho Chi Minh City (IFC relations of HCMC), especially from 1986 to present. In your opinion, what are the causes of these achievements/limitations?
2. Could you please comment on the characteristics, trends of cooperation and development in the world and in the region today? How will these characteristics and trends affect the trend of IFC relations of HCMC in the coming time?
3. In your opinion, what adjustments should be made in terms of institutions/policies/legal documents/apparatus/personnel in order for HCMC's IFC relations to increase its effectiveness, make the most of external resources for the development of the City in particular and the whole country in general?
4. Please share the experiences and practical lessons in implementing substate/subnational IFC relations in the world that you know.

SURVEY NOTE
(FOR INDIVIDUALS)

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am implementing the city-level scientific research project entitled '*Current situation and solutions to improve the effectiveness of the subnational friendly international cooperation relation of Hồ Chí Minh City*' with a view to enhancing the effectiveness of the relationship between HCMC and her sister cities". The purpose of the Project is to help the City systematize its substate/subnational international friendly cooperative relations through each stage (the process of formation and development, the factors affecting the achievements and limitations); predict the trends, propose solutions to improve relation productivity, contribute actively to building the most effective policies.

In order to fulfill this task, I would like to invite you to contribute to the above topic by answering the questions below. You can refuse to answer any questions that you do not want to answer. However, I hope you will answer them all. Your honest answers are a valuable contribution to my research outcome.

Please give your answers by circling the letter of the answer options suitable to your thought (multiple answers can be selected) or writing your opinion on the separate lines.

I guarantee that all the information I collect is used for scientific purposes, and I do not disclose your personal information or the content of your responses.

Thank you very much for your support.

A. PERSONAL INFORMATION: (Please circle the appropriate option).

- 1. Gender:**
- a. Male
 - b. Female

- 2. Employer:**
- a. Department, office in the City
 - b. Social and political organizations
 - c. University, Research Institute
 - d. Retired specialist

- 3. Age:**
- a. 20 – 30
 - b. 30 – 40
 - c. 40 – 50
 - d. 50 – 60
 - e. Over 60

B. SURVEY QUESTIONS:

Question content
<p>1. You understand the concept of "Substate/subnational International Friendly Cooperative Relation of Ho Chi Minh City as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. The twinning relationship between HCMC and foreign localities, established on the basis of the two localities signing international agreements.b. The general cooperative relationship between HCMC and foreign localities, not necessarily based on the conclusion of an international agreement.c. The general cooperative relationship between HCMC and foreign localities and/or international organizations, international financial institutions ...d. Have never known about this concept.e. A different opinion:

.....
.....
.....

2. In your opinion, the foreign relation goals set forth at the 12th National Party Congress are:

- a. *Improving the effectiveness of foreign relations and taking the initiative in international integration.*
- b. *Keeping peace and stability, creating an favorable environment and conditions to develop and defend the country.*
- c. *Enhancing our country's position in the international arena.*
- d. All the comments above.
- e. A different opinion:

.....
.....
.....

3. In your opinion, the foreign relation tasks set out at the 10th City Party Congress are:

- a. Effectively and synchronously carrying out foreign relation activities of the Party, State diplomacy, People's diplomacy in the fields of politics, economics, science - technology, education - training and culture; promoting cultural exchange and propagation activities with other countries in the region and around the world.
- b. Enhancing the renewal of propaganda activities, foreign relation communication, promoting the image of Vietnam and the City to attract foreign investors and overseas Vietnamese to participate in developing the City and building the country.
- c. Ensuring national security and national independence while developing external economic relations.
- d. Well performing the content of cooperation signed with localities of other countries and continuing to expand international cooperation under the motto of diversifying partners and fields of cooperation, attaching importance to the quality and effectiveness of cooperation. Proactively preventing negative impacts arising in the process of international integration.
- e. Well carrying out the work on Vietnamese people living abroad, focusing on activities to support the people to preserve and promote national cultural identity, look to the Fatherland, and contribute to building the City and the country.
- f. All the comments above.
- g. A different opinion:

<p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>
<p>4. In your opinion, so far, how many foreign localities has HCMC had substate/subnational international friendly cooperative relations (IFC relations)?</p> <p>a. Over 20</p> <p>b. About 40</p> <p>c. Above 50</p> <p>d. A different opinion:</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>
<p>5. Do you know about the localities with which HCMC has IFC relations?</p> <p>a. Yes (please continue to question 6)</p> <p>b. No (please continue to question 7)</p>
<p>6. Could you please list some foreign localities with which HCMC has IFC relations?</p> <p>a.</p> <p>b.</p> <p>c.</p>
<p>7 In your opinion, how many foreign consulates are there in Ho Chi Minh City?</p> <p>a. 55</p> <p>b. 45</p> <p>c. 25</p> <p>d. A different opinion:</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>
<p>8. Could you please name some foreign consulates in Ho Chi Minh City?</p> <p>a.</p> <p>b.</p> <p>c.</p>
<p>9. In your opinion, which is the most important achievement of IFC relations of HCMC so far?</p>

- a. Attracting significant FDI inflows, creating jobs, taking advantage of international experience to apply to the City's actual situation
- b. Promoting cooperation in economy, culture, education, etc. between the City and international localities in depth, contributing to the socio-economic development of the City
- c. The position of the City is enhanced.
- d. There are no clear achievements.
- e. A different opinion:

.....

.....

.....

10. In your opinion, the limitations of HCMC's IFC relations of the recent years are:

- a. Although the City has IFC relations with many international localities, most of them are Asian localities, and the City has not focused on cooperating with highly developed localities in the remaining regions, especially Europe and North America.
- b. Most of the cooperation initiatives between HCMC and foreign localities have been actively initiated by the partner side, and the City plays the only role of receiving, and the initiative of the City is not high.
- c. Although cooperation projects between HCMC and foreign localities are large in number, their effectiveness is limited and has not contributed practically to the City's development.
- d. The IFC relations of the City is a waste of resources, and does not produce any clear effect.
- e. A different opinion:

.....

.....

.....

11. In your opinion, the IFC relations of HCMC should focus on:

- a. Promoting economic cooperation (investment, trade, development assistance).
- b. Implementing cultural exchange and education activities, enhancing understanding and close bonds between the City residents and international friends.
- c. Calling resources, learning experience in the field of urban management and sustainable development.
- d. A different opinion:

<p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>
<p>12. In your opinion, what is the impact of the promotion and introduction of foreign localities in Ho Chi Minh City on the people of the City:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Contributing to raising the people's awareness and understanding of foreign localities, providing necessary information for businesses on investment and trade opportunities with partners in foreign localities. b. Promoting international economic and cultural exchanges of the City in particular and the whole country in general. c. Diversifying the spiritual life and entertainment of the City people. d. No impact at all. e. A different opinion: <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>
<p>13. Have you ever participated in any promotion and introduction activities regarding foreign localities in Ho Chi Minh City?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Yes (please continue with question 14). b. Never (please continue with question 15).
<p>14. What is your impression of the activities of promoting and introducing foreign localities in Ho Chi Minh City that you have attended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Carefully prepared, thoughtfully organized, highly effective in advertising. b. Formally natured, sketchy, ineffective. c. I have got no deep impression at all. d. A different opinion: <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>
<p>15. In your opinion, how does the promotion and introduction activities of HCMC in foreign localities affect the people of other countries?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Enhancing the understanding and friendship of the locals towards the City in particular and Vietnam in general.

- b. Promoting the number of foreign tourists, foreign investors and businesses to the City in particular and Vietnam in general.
- c. Supporting cultural research activities, orienting the tourism - trade - investment market of both the City and the localities having IFC relations with the City.
- d. No effect, waste of resources.
- e. A different opinion:
.....
.....
.....

16. Have you ever participated in organizing the activities to promote and introduce Ho Chi Minh City in foreign localities?

- a. Yes (please continue with question 17).
- b. Never (please continue with question 18).

17. What is your impression of the activities of promoting and introducing Ho Chi Minh City in foreign localities that you have attended:

- a. Carefully prepared, thoughtfully organized, highly effective in advertising.
- b. The lead agency of Ho Chi Minh City well promoted the role of connecting with the localities, effectively supporting the concerned agencies of Ho Chi Minh City.
- c. The localities had effective coordination and support for the organization.
- d. The activities were only superficial, sketchily organized and ineffective.
- e. I have got no deep impression at all.
- f. A different opinion:
.....
.....
.....

18. In your opinion, in order to improve the effectiveness of its IFC relations, the City should:

- a. Increase establishment of the relationship with highly developed localities, which can support the City's development.
- b. Define clear regulations on the implementation roadmap, responsibilities and obligations when implementing cooperative projects.
- c. Strengthen the autonomy and responsibility of the lead agency of HCMC.

d. Focus on developing the infrastructure of the knowledge economy; specify criteria for selecting partners; specify the focus and key points on the basis of the City's development needs and orientations.

e. A different opinion:

.....
.....
.....

19. In your opinion, what are the challenges for the City in the process of expanding and improving the effectiveness of IFC relations?

a. The capacity of the staff / lead agency is limited; the initiative and enthusiasm of the staff/lead agency is not high.

b. The attractiveness of HCMC to international partners is not high, so it is difficult to choose partners.

c. Many partners have their own intentions during the cooperation process. The City needs to be very alert and vigilant so as not to fall into the trap of "the peaceful evolution".

d. A different opinion:

.....
.....
.....

20. In your opinion, what are the advantages for the City in the process of expanding and improving the effectiveness of IFC relations?

a. The Consulate Division in the City, Vietnamese diplomatic missions abroad support the connection of the City with foreign partners.

b. The international attractiveness and international prestige of the City are high so it is easy to choose the right partners.

c. Resolution 54 of the National Assembly gives the City certain autonomy in the field of foreign relations.

d. A different opinion:

.....
.....
.....

21. In your opinion, what is the lead agency in charge of proposing the establishment and promotion of IFC relations of HCMC?

- a. Department of Foreign Affairs - Office of the City People's Committee
- b. The City Department of Foreign Affairs.
- c. Union of the City Friendship Organizations.
- d. Overseas Vietnamese Committee of the City.
- e. A different opinion:

.....

.....

.....

22. Are you in charge of foreign affairs / international relations at your unit?

- a. Yes.
- b. No.

23. Do you know the name and contact information of the person in charge at the lead agency on IFC relations of HCMC?

- a. Yes (please continue with questions 24 and 25).
- b. No (please continue with question 26).

24. Do you often coordinate the work with the officers in charge at the lead agency on IFC relations of HCMC?

- a. Yes (please continue with question 25).
- b. No (please continue with question 26).

25. What is your assessment of the coordination capacity and effectiveness of the officers in charge at the lead agency of IFC relations of HCMC?

- a. Having good capacity, making enthusiastic coordination, providing effective support.
- b. Having average capacity, mainly helping to provide contact points; I still have to research the solutions myself.
- c. Having poor capacity, no spirit of coordination.
- d. A different opinion:

.....

.....

.....

26. In your opinion, what are the directions of HCMC's IFC relations of the next 5 years?

- a. Expanding the number, promoting relations with multilateral organizations instead of focusing only on bilateral relations.
- b. Continuing to focus on economic cooperation (investment, trade, development assistance).

- c. Properly focusing on the field of urban management to contribute to addressing the challenges of a megacity, responding to climate change and sustainable development.
- d. Properly focusing on the fields of cultural promotion, cultural exchange and education in order to enhance the friendship with international localities.
- e. A different opinion:
.....
.....
.....

SURVEY RESULT

Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	58	47.5	47.5	47.5
	Female	64	52.5	52.5	100.0
	Total	122	100.0	100.0	

Employer

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Departments, offices of the City	60	51.7	51.7	51.7
	Political - social organizations	35	30.2	30.2	81.9
	Universities, research institutes	18	15.5	15.5	97.4
	Retired specialist	3	2.6	2.6	100.0
	Total	116	100.0	100.0	

Age

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	20-30	21	17.2	17.2	17.2
	31-40	61	50.0	50.0	67.2
	41-50	30	24.6	24.6	91.8
	51-60	8	6.6	6.6	98.4
	Over 60	2	1.6	1.6	100.0
	Total	122	100.0	100.0	

**Understand the concept of "Substate/subnational International Friendly
Cooperative Relation of Ho Chi Minh City**

		Frequenc y	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	"Twinning relationship" between HCMC and foreign localities under signed international agreements	65	53.3	53.3	53.3
	"Twinning relationship" between HCMC and foreign localities under no signed international agreements	18	14.8	14.8	68.0
	"Twinning relationship" between HCMC and foreign localities and international organizations	30	24.6	24.6	92.6
	Have never known about this concept.	8	6.6	6.6	99.2
	Others	1	.8	.8	100.0
	Total	122	100.0	100.0	

\$B2 Frequencies

	Responses	
--	-----------	--

		N	Percent	Percent of Cases
\$B2 ^a	Improving the effectiveness of foreign relations and taking the initiative in international integration	25	16.4%	20.0%
	Keeping peace and stability, creating an favorable environment and conditions to develop and defend the country	20	13.2%	16.0%
	Enhancing our country's position in the international arena	18	11.8%	14.4%
	All the comments above	88	57.9%	70.4%
	A different opinion	1	.7%	.8%
Total		152	100.0%	121.6%

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

\$B3 Frequencies

		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
\$B3 ^a	Effectively implementing foreign relations (political, economic, science and technology,	23	14.8%	18.4%

education and training, and cultural relations with countries			
Enhancing the renewal of propaganda activities, foreign relation communication, promoting the image of Vietnam	17	11.0%	13.6%
Ensuring national security and national independence while developing external economic relations	10	6.5%	8.0%
Well performing the content of cooperation signed with localities	8	5.2%	6.4%
Well carrying out the work on Vietnamese people living abroad, focusing on activities to support the people	7	4.5%	5.6%
All the comments above	90	58.1%	72.0%
Total	155	100.0%	124.0%

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

Ho Chi Minh City has substate/subnational international friendly cooperation relations

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Over 20	27	22.0	22.0	22.0
	About 40	48	39.0	39.0	61.0
	Above 50	45	36.6	36.6	97.6
	Others	3	2.4	2.4	100.0
	Total	123	100.0	100.0	

Know about the localities with which HCMC has relations

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	76	60.8	60.8	60.8
	No	49	39.2	39.2	100.0
	Total	125	100.0	100.0	

The most important achievement of IFC relations of HCMC

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Significant FDI attraction	54	43.5	43.5	43.5
	Promoting the cooperation in terms of economics, culture, education ... with international localities	58	46.8	46.8	90.3
	The position is enhanced.	7	5.6	5.6	96.0
	No clear achievements	3	2.4	2.4	98.4
	Others	2	1.6	1.6	100.0
	Total	124	100.0	100.0	

SB10 Frequencies

		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
\$B10 ^a	Mainly having relations with Asian localities	43	27.9%	35.8%
	Initiatives with localities initiated by partner side	42	27.3%	35.0%
	The cooperation projects between Ho Chi Minh City and foreign localities are large in quantity but limited in effectiveness	64	41.6%	53.3%
	The IFC relations of the City is a waste of resources, and does not produce any clear effect	5	3.2%	4.2%
Total		154	100.0%	128.3%

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

\$B11 Frequencies

		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
\$B11 ^a	Promoting economic cooperation	69	35.8%	56.6%
	Deploying the activities of culture and education exchange	44	22.8%	36.1%

	Calling resources, learning experience	80	41.5%	65.6%
Total		193	100.0%	158.2%

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

\$B12 Frequencies

		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
\$B12 a	Contributing to raising the people's awareness and understanding of foreign localities	88	44.7%	72.7%
	Promoting international economic and cultural exchanges of the City	63	32.0%	52.1%
	Diversifying the spiritual life and entertainment	41	20.8%	33.9%
	No impact at all	5	2.5%	4.1%
Total		197	100.0%	162.8%

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

Having attended promotion activities

		Frequ ency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Already	60	48.8	48.8	48.8
	Never	63	51.2	51.2	100.0
	Total	123	100.0	100.0	

Impression of the promotion

		Frequ ency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Carefully prepared, thoughtfully organized, highly effective	54	83.1	83.1	83.1
	Formally natured, sketchy, ineffective	4	6.2	6.2	89.2
	No deep impression at all	6	9.2	9.2	98.5
	A different opinion	1	1.5	1.5	100.0
	Total	65	100.0	100.0	

\$B15 Frequencies

		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
\$B15 a	Enhancing the understanding and friendship of the locals	53	27.9%	45.3%
	Promoting the number of foreign tourists, foreign investors and businesses	84	44.2%	71.8%
	Supporting cultural research activities, orienting the tourism - trade - investment market	52	27.4%	44.4%

	No effect, waste of resources	1	.5%	.9%
Total		190	100.0%	162.4%

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

Have participated in promotion activities

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Have participated in organization of promotion activities	21	17.2	17.2	17.2
	Have not participated in organization of promotion activities	101	82.8	82.8	100.0
	Total	122	100.0	100.0	

Impression of the activities of promoting and advertising HCMC

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Carefully prepared, thoughtfully organized, highly effective	10	33.3	33.3	33.3
	The lead agency of Ho Chi Minh City well promoted the role of connecting with the localities	6	20.0	20.0	53.3
	The localities had effective coordination and support for the organization	3	10.0	10.0	63.3

	The activities were only superficial, sketchily organized and ineffective in promoting	7	23.3	23.3	86.7
	No deep impression at all	3	10.0	10.0	96.7
	A different opinion	1	3.3	3.3	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

\$B18 Frequencies

		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
\$B18 ^a	Increase establishment of the relationship with highly developed localities	55	23.8%	46.2%
	Define clear regulations on the implementation roadmap, responsibilities	49	21.2%	41.2%
	Strengthen the autonomy and responsibility of the lead agency of HCMC	57	24.7%	47.9%
	Concentrate on developing the infrastructure of the knowledge economy	70	30.3%	58.8%
Total		231	100.0%	194.1%

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

\$B19 Frequencies

		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
\$B19 a	The capacity of the staff of the lead agency is limited; the initiative and enthusiasm not high.	84	53.5%	72.4%
	The attractiveness of HCMC to international partners is not high	35	22.3%	30.2%
	Many partners have their own intentions during the cooperation process, so the City needs to be very alert	38	24.2%	32.8%
Total		157	100.0%	135.3%

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

\$B20 Frequencies

		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
\$B20 a	The Consulate Division in the City, Vietnamese diplomatic missions	62	36.0%	52.5%
	The international attractiveness and international prestige	60	34.9%	50.8%

	of the City are high, so it is easy to choose			
	Resolution 54 of the National Assembly gives the City certain autonomy	50	29.1%	42.4%
Total		172	100.0%	145.8%

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

**The lead agency in charge of proposing the establishment and promotion of IFC
relations of HCMC**

		Frequ ency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Department of Foreign Affairs - Office of the City People's Committee	37	30.3	30.3	30.3
	Department of Foreign Affairs of the City	75	61.5	61.5	91.8
	Union of the City Friendship Organizations	5	4.1	4.1	95.9
	Overseas Vietnamese Committee of the City	2	1.6	1.6	97.5
	A different opinion	3	2.5	2.5	100.0
	Total	122	100.0	100.0	

Are you in charge of foreign affairs / international relations

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	33	26.8	26.8	26.8
	No	90	73.2	73.2	100.0
	Total	123	100.0	100.0	

Do you know the name and contact information of the person in charge

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	39	31.7	31.7	31.7
	No	84	68.3	68.3	100.0
	Total	123	100.0	100.0	

Do you often coordinate the work with the officers in charge at the lead agency

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	27	60.0	60.0	60.0
	No	18	40.0	40.0	100.0
	Total	45	100.0	100.0	

What is your assessment of the coordination capacity and effectiveness of the officers

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Having good capacity, making enthusiastic coordination, providing effective support	26	81.3	81.3	81.3

	Having average capacity, mainly helping to provide contact points	5	15.6	15.6	96.9
	A different opinion	1	3.1	3.1	100.0
	Total	32	100.0	100.0	

\$B26 Frequencies

		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
\$B26 ^a	Expanding the number, promoting relations with multilateral organizations	49	23.2%	40.8%
	Continuing to focus on economic cooperation	51	24.2%	42.5%
	Properly focusing on the field of urban management	68	32.2%	56.7%
	Properly focusing on the fields of cultural promotion, cultural exchange	43	20.4%	35.8%
Total		211	100.0%	175.8%

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

Crosstabs

Working unit * Age Crosstabulation

			Age					Total
			20-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	Over 60	
	Departments, offices of the City		7	33	16	3	0	59
		%	33.3%	57.9%	57.1%	42.9%	0.0%	51.3%
	Political - social organizations		8	17	8	2	0	35
		%	38.1%	29.8%	28.6%	28.6%	0.0%	30.4%
	Universities, research institutes		6	7	4	1	0	18
		%	28.6%	12.3%	14.3%	14.3%	0.0%	15.7%
	Retired specialist		0	0	0	1	2	3
		%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	14.3%	100.0%	2.6%
	Total		21	57	28	7	2	115
		%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Working unit * Gender Crosstabulation

			Gender		Total
			Male	Female	
	Departments, offices of the City		27	33	60
		%	49.1%	54.1%	51.7%
	Political - social organizations		19	16	35
		%	34.5%	26.2%	30.2%
	Universities, research institutes		7	11	18
		%	12.7%	18.0%	15.5%
	Retired specialist		2	1	3
		%	3.6%	1.6%	2.6%
	Total		55	61	116
		%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Crosstabs

Age * Gender Crosstabulation

			Gender		Total
			Male	Female	
	20-30		12	9	21
		%	21.1%	14.1%	17.4%
	31-40		24	36	60
		%	42.1%	56.3%	49.6%
	41-50		14	16	30
		%	24.6%	25.0%	24.8%
	51-60		5	3	8
		%	8.8%	4.7%	6.6%
	Over 60		2	0	2
		%	3.5%	0.0%	1.7%
	Total		57	64	121
			100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

\$B11*gender Crosstabulation

			Gender		Total
			Male	Female	
\$B11 a	Promoting economic cooperation		34	33	67
		%	59.6%	53.2%	
	Deploying the activities of culture and education exchange		21	21	42
		%	36.8%	33.9%	
	Calling resources, learning experience		38	39	77
		%	66.7%	62.9%	
Total			57	62	119

Percentages and totals are based on respondents.

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

\$B12*gender Crosstabulation

			Gender		Total
			Male	Female	
\$B12 ^a	Contributing to raising the people's awareness and understanding of foreign localities		39	46	85
		%	69.6%	74.2%	
	Promoting international economic and cultural exchanges of the City		30	30	60
		%	53.6%	48.4%	
	Diversifying the spiritual life and entertainment		20	18	38
		%	35.7%	29.0%	
	No impact at all		3	1	4
		%	5.4%	1.6%	
	Total		56	62	118

Percentages and totals are based on respondents.

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

\$B15*gender Crosstabulation

			Gender		Total
			Male	Female	
\$B15 ^a	Enhancing the understanding and friendship of the locals		28	22	50
		%	52.8%	36.1%	

	Promoting the number of foreign tourists, foreign investors and businesses		37	44	81
		%	69.8%	72.1%	
	Supporting cultural research activities, orienting the tourism - trade - investment market		23	26	49
		%	43.4%	42.6%	
	No effect, waste of resources		1	0	1
		%	1.9%	0.0%	
Total			53	61	114

Percentages and totals are based on respondents.

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

\$B18*gender Crosstabulation

			Gender		Total
			Male	Female	
\$B18 a	Increase establishment of the relationship with highly developed localities		25	27	52
		%	44.6%	45.0%	
	Define clear regulations on the implementation roadmap, responsibilities		25	22	47
		%	44.6%	36.7%	
	Strengthen the autonomy and responsibility of the		28	27	55
		%	50.0%	45.0%	

	lead agency of HCMC				
	Concentrate on		33	34	67
	developing the infrastructure of the knowledge economy	%	58.9%	56.7%	
Total			56	60	116

Percentages and totals are based on respondents.

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

\$B19*gender Crosstabulation

			Gender		Total
			Male	Female	
\$B19 ^a	The capacity of the staff of the lead agency is limited; the initiative and enthusiasm not high.		45	37	82
		%	81.8%	62.7%	
	The attractiveness of HCMC to international partners is not high		14	20	34
		%	25.5%	33.9%	
	Many partners have their own intentions during the cooperation process, so the City needs to be very alert		15	23	38
		%	27.3%	39.0%	
Total			55	59	114

Percentages and totals are based on respondents.

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

\$B20*gender Crosstabulation

	Gender	Total
--	--------	-------

			Male	Female	
\$B20 ^a	The Consulate Division in the City, Vietnamese diplomatic missions		27	33	60
		%	49.1%	55.0%	
	The international attractiveness and international prestige of the City are high, so it is easy to choose		30	27	57
		%	54.5%	45.0%	
	Resolution 54 of the National Assembly gives the City certain autonomy		19	29	48
		%	34.5%	48.3%	
	Total		55	60	115

Percentages and totals are based on respondents.

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

\$B26*gender Crosstabulation

			Gender		Total
			Male	Female	
\$B26 ^a	Expanding the number, promoting relations with multilateral organizations		26	22	48
		%	45.6%	36.7%	
	Continuing to focus on economic cooperation		27	22	49
		%	47.4%	36.7%	

	Properly focusing on the field of urban management		31	34	65
		%	54.4%	56.7%	
	Properly focusing on the fields of cultural promotion, cultural exchange		18	23	41
		%	31.6%	38.3%	
Total			57	60	117

Percentages and totals are based on respondents.

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

\$B11*working unit Crosstabulation

			Employer				Total
			Departments, offices of the City	Political - social organizations	Universities, research institutes	Retired specialist	
\$B11 ^a	Promoting economic cooperation	Count	36	16	7	3	62
		% within worki ng unit	61.0%	47.1%	41.2%	100.0%	
	Deploying the activities of culture and education exchange	Count	19	14	6	1	40
		% within worki ng unit	32.2%	41.2%	35.3%	33.3%	
	Calling resources, learning experience	Count	38	24	10	2	74
		% within worki ng unit	64.4%	70.6%	58.8%	66.7%	
Total		Count	59	34	17	3	113

Percentages and totals are based on respondents.

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

\$B12*working unit Crosstabulation

			Employer				Total
			Departments, offices of the City	Political - social organizations	Universities, research institutes	Retired specialist	
\$B12 a	Contributing to raising the people's awareness and understanding of foreign localities		46	22	11	2	81
		%	80.7%	62.9%	64.7%	66.7%	
	Promoting international economic and cultural exchanges of the City		26	22	7	2	57
		%	45.6%	62.9%	41.2%	66.7%	
	Diversifying the spiritual life and entertainment		21	10	4	0	35
		%	36.8%	28.6%	23.5%	0.0%	
	No impact at all		1	2	0	0	3
		%	1.8%	5.7%	0.0%	0.0%	
	Total			57	35	17	3

Percentages and totals are based on respondents.

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

\$B15*working unit Crosstabulation

	Employer	Total
--	----------	-------

			Departments, offices of the City	Political - social organizations	Universities, research institutes	Retired specialist	
\$B15 ^a	Enhancing the understanding and friendship of the locals		24	20	3	1	48
		%	42.9%	58.8%	17.6%	50.0%	
	Promoting the number of foreign tourists, foreign investors and businesses		39	26	10	2	77
		%	69.6%	76.5%	58.8%	100.0%	
	Supporting cultural research activities, orienting the tourism - trade - investment market		23	17	8	0	48
		%	41.1%	50.0%	47.1%	0.0%	
Total			56	34	17	2	109

Percentages and totals are based on respondents.

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

\$B18*working unit Crosstabulation

			Employer				Total
			Departments, offices of the City	Political - social organizations	Universities, research institutes	Retired specialist	
\$B18 ^a	Increase establishment of the relationship with highly		21	20	6	1	48
		%	37.5%	57.1%	35.3%	50.0%	

	developed localities						
	Define clear regulations on the implementation roadmap, responsibilities		19	18	6	2	45
		%	33.9%	51.4%	35.3%	100.0%	
	Strengthen the autonomy and responsibility of the lead agency of HCMC		24	20	9	0	53
		%	42.9%	57.1%	52.9%	0.0%	
	Concentrate on developing the infrastructure of the knowledge economy		36	18	8	1	63
		%	64.3%	51.4%	47.1%	50.0%	
	Total		56	35	17	2	110

Percentages and totals are based on respondents.

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

\$B19*working unit Crosstabulation

			Employer				Total	
			Departments, offices of the City	Political - social organizations	Universities, research institutes	Retired specialist		
\$B19 ^a	The capacity of the staff of the lead agency is limited; the initiative and enthusiasm not high.		37	25	15	2	79	
		%	66.1%	73.5%	88.2%	100.0%		
	The attractiveness of HCMC to international partners is not high		17	12	3	0	32	
		%	30.4%	35.3%	17.6%	0.0%		
	Many partners have their own intentions during the cooperation process, so the City needs to be very alert		25	8	3	0	36	
		%	44.6%	23.5%	17.6%	0.0%		
Total				56	34	17	2	109

Percentages and totals are based on respondents.

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

\$B20*working unit Crosstabulation

			Employer				Total
			Departments, offices of the City	Political - social organizations	Universities, research institutes	Retired specialist	
\$B20 ^a	The Consulate		30	20	6	2	58
	Division in the City, Vietnamese diplomatic missions	%	52.6%	58.8%	40.0%	66.7%	
			29	14	8	2	53

	The international attractiveness and international prestige of the City are high, so it is easy to choose	%	50.9%	41.2%	53.3%	66.7%	
	Resolution 54 of the National Assembly gives the City certain autonomy		26	14	5	0	45
		%	45.6%	41.2%	33.3%	0.0%	
Total			57	34	15	3	109

Percentages and totals are based on respondents.

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

\$B26*working unit Crosstabulation

			Employer				Total
			Departments, offices of the City	Political - social organizations	Universities, research institutes	Retired specialist	
\$B26 ^a	Expanding the number, promoting relations with multilateral organizations		22	16	7	2	47
		%	38.6%	45.7%	41.2%	100.0%	
	Continuing to focus on economic cooperation		25	16	3	1	45
		%	43.9%	45.7%	17.6%	50.0%	
	Properly focusing on the field of urban management		36	17	7	1	61
		%	63.2%	48.6%	41.2%	50.0%	
	Properly focusing on the fields of cultural		15	20	3	0	38
		%	26.3%	57.1%	17.6%	0.0%	

	promotion, cultural exchange						
Total			57	35	17	2	111

Percentages and totals are based on respondents.

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

LIST OF INDIVIDUALS FOR IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW

I. From the city's departments and agencies

- 1 Planning and investment - Ms Mai, Deputy Director General.
- 2 Culture and Sport – Mr. Nam, Deputy Director General.
- 3 Tourism – Mr. Vu, Director General.
- 4 ITPC –Ms Van, Deputy Director General.

II. From experts of the city who in charge international relations

- 1 Mr. Vu Hac Bong, former Director General of Department of External Relations Department - HCMC
- 2 Mr. Le Quang Long, Director General of Department of External Relations Department – HCMC.
- 3 Mr. Tran Phuoc Anh, Deputy Director General of Department of External Relations Department - HCMC

III. Some partner cities of HCMC like Japan, Korea, the Netherland.

IV. Head/deputy head of Vietnames commissions in foreign countries.

- 1 Ms. Tran Thi Hieu Hanh, Deputy Consul General of Vietnam in Sanfrancisco, The United States.
- 2 Mr. Nguyen Vu Tu, Ambassaor of Vietnam to Korea.
- 3 Mr. Doan Tuan Linh, Ambassador of Vietnam to Belgium.
- 4 Mr. Tran Quang Dung, Consul General of Vietnam in Van Couver, Canada.